

PART-TIME STUDENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012

American University Washington College of Law

The Washington College of Law is committed to providing a part-time legal education that matches in intellectual depth and professional preparation what is provided in its full-time program.

This Handbook has been prepared by the Office of Student Affairs to provide the information you need to use your time efficiently. We hope that it allows you to make fuller use of the available opportunities and to enjoy more richly a unique period in your life.

Although this Handbook refers to evening students as “part-time,” WCL truly regards you as “full-time” given the many other responsibilities you have. The “part-time” designation is simply for official purposes.

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I. INTRODUCTION TO WCL

A. Getting To and From WCL

Parking

Students need a permit to park at both the WCL garage and at the Katzen Arts Center garage near the AU main campus. During the weekday, all students, including those in the part-time division, are required to park in the Katzen garage. After 5 p.m., part-time students are permitted to park at the WCL garage.

WCL’s garage is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. During off hours and on weekends, students must use their student IDs to gain access to the garage.

There is a parking fee for students who wish to park either at the Katzen Arts Center or on campus; the fee is usually billed to students along with their tuition. To apply for a parking permit, students should contact Facilities Management, suite 383, at 202-274-4003, or visit <http://www.wcl.american.edu/facilities/>.

Metro

Many part-time students travel to and from WCL by Metro. Students should take the metro to the Tenleytown metro stop, then take an AU shuttle to the law school. The shuttle is free and runs to and from the Tenleytown metro station every 15 minutes between the hours of 8 a.m. and 12:30 a.m. Mondays through Fridays. For an updated shuttle schedule, please check <http://www.american.edu/finance/ts/shuttle-wcl.html>.

B. Orientation

Orientation for part-time students is held in late August in the evenings, in the week prior to the start of classes. Orientation sessions typically include information on academic and administrative matters, an informal class presented by first-year faculty, and one or more social events. There is a reception with the Dean and a barbecue for the entire entering class at the end of orientation week. More detailed information is sent to incoming students during the summer.

C. The WCL Community

In the age of the internet, it is easier than ever for part-time students to be connected to the WCL community. Important electronic contacts/connections are provided below. Most of the information students need can be found on the Student Affairs home page: www.wcl.american.edu/studentaffairs.

WCL's email system is run through myau.american.edu. Students are automatically assigned an email address upon matriculation. Students should check this account on a regular basis as it is the primary means by which the law school communicates with students (including MyWCL). Students may forward this email address to a personal address through the myau.american.edu portal. The myau.american.edu portal also allows students to view their course schedules and register for upper-level courses. Reporting of any problems should be to the Office of Technology, comptech@wcl.american.edu. A useful guide for getting oriented to technology at WCL can be found at www.wcl.american.edu/techres/.

The WCL community is an active one, with a regular schedule of conferences, lectures, student events, and other interesting programs. Part-time students may find it more difficult to participate as fully as their full-time counterparts in the school's extracurricular life given their additional demands. They may, however, be able to view a number of events by subscribing to the WCL Podcast: <http://www.wcl.american.edu/podcast/>. The Office of Technology podcasts almost every event at WCL, so students, faculty, and the world can listen when it is convenient for them. In addition, the Office of Technology can stream media to allow for live and/or on-demand attendance via webcast at WCL events.

A calendar of WCL events is also available on the website. Students should check this calendar ahead of time for events that interest them and, if possible, rearrange their schedules to attend a daytime event.

D. Counseling Needs

WCL is committed to providing counseling services to our students. Students are encouraged to call or visit Associate Dean of Students David Jaffe or Assistant Director Myra Wilder for assistance with personal as well as academic matters. Sherry Weaver, Director of Diversity Services, is also available (202-274-4032; sweaver@wcl.american.edu). These three individuals are in suite 300; while meetings may be held without an appointment, one should check first to ensure someone will be in the office. All counseling sessions are confidential.

Students may also contact AU's Counseling Center (Mary Graydon Center, room 214; 202-885-3500) to meet with professional counselors, including same day emergency appointments, when needed.

E. Extended Office Hours

Staff members in several WCL departments extend their day to support part-time students. For a listing of office hours by department, see Appendix A of this handbook or call the department of interest.

F. Purchasing Books

The store for law books is on the main University campus in the Bender Arena complex. Students also can order books through the bookstore on the internet at www.american.bkstr.com.

Course Packet Distribution Center

The Course Packet Distribution Center (room 465; 202-274-4135) makes available supplemental course materials that part-time students can purchase for their classes. The normal hours are 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 9:00 a.m.- 7:30 p.m. on weekdays during the first two weeks of each semester. The Course Packet Distribution Center is also open 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. the first two Saturdays of each semester.

G. Technology at WCL

For a comprehensive guide to information technology at WCL, students are encouraged to pick up a copy of "Getting Connected" at the Student Help Desk on the second floor of the Pence Law Library.

Computers

Public computers are available for student use in the Pence Law Library and in the SBA Lounge. The Pence Law Library contains two computer labs with more than 70 workstations. All student computers are equipped with the Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Reader, Firefox, and DeepFreeze, and have access to network laserjet printers.

Most classrooms and public areas have wireless network connection. In addition, most classrooms have electrical power at every seat. Most WCL students own a laptop, although it is not required. Instructions to connect to the WCL's wireless network are found at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/techres>. Technicians at

the Student Help Desk (Second Floor in the Pence Law Library) can help you.

In addition, AU and WCL have formed strategic partnerships with Dell Computer Corporation to provide an academic discount on the latest available technologies, computers, and peripherals for their community members. Students can access Dell's discount pages through the AU portal at myau.american.edu.

Loaner Laptop Program

Realizing that students may have to return their personal computer to the manufacturer for repair, WCL provides laptops available for checkout at the Circulation Desk in the Pence Law Library. The computers may be borrowed for a seven-day period; for more information visit:

http://intranet.wcl.american.edu/techres/complab/loaner_laptop.cfm.

Computers in the Classroom

Although most professors permit students to take notes on laptop computers in class, they may regulate the use of laptops in any manner that they feel is necessary to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and to avoid distracting others, so long as the policy does not conflict with WCL's laptop use policy.

Taking Exams on Your Laptop

Students who wish to take exams on a computer will need to use their own laptop. Some professors also require the Exam4 software for their exams. Students should check with the Office of Technology to upload Exam4 onto their laptops for exams. More information on Exam4 and laptop specifications is found at http://www.wcl.american.edu/techres/exam_policies.cfm.

Computer Recommendations

The Office of Technology posts current hardware and software recommendations online at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/techres/laptop.cfm>.

Most new laptops already have built-in ethernet and wireless adapters; however, if the computer lacks them, the AU Bookstore has a selection of adapters and cables.

H. Pence Law Library Services

The library makes every effort to accommodate WCL's part-time students, as reflected by its hours of service and services available to all students.

Library Hours

Library hours during the academic school year are as follows:

Mon. – Fri.	8 a.m. to midnight
Sat. – Sun.	9 a.m. to midnight

Extended hours are available to currently enrolled WCL students, faculty and staff.

In addition to the usual library services, all group study rooms, the student computer lab, printers, copiers and fax machines are available whenever the Library is open.

During the reading and examination periods, the library is open to WCL students 24/7.

Circulation Services

A full-time or part-time circulation manager is on duty in the library at all times that the library is open to the public, with the exception of the 24-hour access period for the reading and examination periods.

Reference

A reference librarian is available until 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Saturday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Students may also obtain reference assistance by emailing reflib@wcl.american.edu, or may make appointments for reference assistance.

Reference Instruction Classes

The library holds these at various times to accommodate all students. Classes are announced through MyWCL and on the library's website.

Remote Access to Electronic Databases

The entire WCL community can log into subscription databases from any location by linking to the library website at <http://library.wcl.american.edu/>. Databases are listed under Research Tools; the WCL community accesses these databases using the same user ID and password used to access the law school network and myau.american.edu.

I. Fitness Center

The AU Jacobs Fitness Center provides the latest in fitness equipment, including stationary bicycles, treadmills, elliptical trainers, step machines, rowers, free weights, plate-loaded and selectorized equipment. In addition, there are two pools that are available for recreational swimming as well as training. A variety of programs and classes are offered. The fitness center is located in the Bender Arena.

Students have access to the fitness center upon matriculation. For more information, please see <http://www.american.edu/jacobsfitness/fitness/facilities.html>.

II. FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL

A. Required Courses

During the first year, part-time students pursue a 19 semester-hour required program of study. The first-year required courses are Torts and Contracts (4 credits each) and Legal Rhetoric (2 credits) in the fall, and Civil Procedure (4 credits), Criminal Law (3 credits), and Legal Rhetoric (2 credits) in the spring. In the second year, the required courses are Constitutional Law and Property (4 credits each in the fall and spring, respectively), Criminal Procedure (3 credits, fall), and Legal Ethics (2 credits, spring). Criminal Procedure and Legal Ethics may be completed during the first summer.

For more information, please refer to the American University Washington College of Law catalog, available through the Office of the Registrar or Student Affairs.

B. Class Assignments

Professors often assign readings for the first day of class. Assignments are listed online on the WCL website, or on the course page on MyWCL.

Posting Class Notices

The Faculty and Administrative Support Services office provides class cancellation and make-up class information to part-time students in three locations: the large monitor in the first floor lobby, on MyWCL, and as a recorded message on the WCL Class Cancellation Line at (202) 274-4400.

C. Access to Faculty

WCL faculty make it a point to be accessible to students. Many faculty members who teach in the evening hold office hours just before class. Others may opt to meet after class, by appointment and/or by telephone and email. Faculty members generally will announce how best to reach them in their syllabus and at the first class (and if not, ask!).

D. Legal Rhetoric

For policies regarding Legal Rhetoric classes, attendance, and assignments, students should follow information provided about the class in the Legal Rhetoric Handbook and by their Legal Rhetoric instructors.

Submitting Legal Rhetoric Assignments

Students are expected to submit all assignments in a timely fashion. The due dates for the assignments are listed in the syllabus; assignments are due at the beginning of class or they will be considered late. All late assignments must be turned in at the Legal Rhetoric Office.

Students are expected to proofread all assignments, including drafts, prior to submitting them. Any assignment that contains more than four proofreading errors will be returned without further assessment and will not be counted as submitted until it is corrected. It will be counted as late and penalized. All drafts must be complete or they will not be counted as submitted and will be returned for completion and counted as late. Drafts will be checked for sufficiency immediately during the class.

E. Studying for Law Classes

The first year of law school is generally the most challenging for law students; not only do students acquire the tools for legal analysis, but they also learn substantive law and develop legal research and writing skills. Developing an established routine and a solid educational foundation from the first year make subsequent years more manageable.

Reading Assignments

Law school reading is dense. Make sure to plan for and allow yourself enough time to read and brief all of your assigned cases. Everyone reads and retains information at a different pace. Several skills come into play—reading comprehension, analytical reasoning ability, how quickly a student can brief a case, and so forth.

A general rule of thumb is that students who expect to earn an A in a class should spend two to three hours studying for every hour of class. This is often not a realistic goal for part-time students due to workloads, families, and other matters that require their attention. There are certainly students who spend that much time studying and do not make As, and students who spend less than half that time studying who do make As. However, at a minimum, students can expect to spend at least one hour per every hour of class to keep up with the reading assignments.

Among students, the amount of time spent reading and taking notes varies widely. It is important for students to identify their priorities, to develop a routine and schedule during which to do their law school assignments, and to try to maintain a balance between school and other commitments.

Study Groups and Outlines

While some students find it helpful to join a study group to provide structured review of course material and preparation for exams, others find they study more efficiently on their own. Like other aspects of law school, each student should decide what works best for him or her.

Outlining is the preparation of a systematic summary in a course. Some students find that outlining the materials for a course helps them learn the material and do not even refer to the outline much during the exam. Many say the process of preparing an outline or summary of the course is an important part of their exam preparation, while others find it too time-consuming and prefer to work with commercial or “inherited” outlines. Some students will prepare a joint outline with a study group. Although many ways of outlining exist, students should bear in mind that outlining is simply a technique for learning the material and should choose a way that helps them.

Types of Outlines

Dozens of commercial study aids are available for every first-year subject. Student preferences vary widely. Students will have to experiment to identify what, if anything, works best for them. Because the temptation is to buy every available study aid, one should browse through the aids at the bookstore prior to making a purchase. Some commercial outlines are also available for students to borrow at the Pence Law Library.

Some students seek outlines of previous students who took the same course from the same professor (the SBA has started a process of collecting such outlines in an online databank). One important caveat: generally, it is difficult to determine the accuracy or reliability of someone else's outline. For this reason and the fact that most of the utility of outlining lies in creating one's own, outlines of previous students are of limited value.

Exam Preparation

As the fall semester proceeds, students will begin to think about preparing for their first law school exams. Many professors hold review sessions prior to the exam date. These will likely be announced in class towards the end of the semester. In addition, many professors make their past exams available to students for practice. These exams are posted on the Pence Law Library's webpage at <http://wcl.american.edu/exams/>. The library website contains all of the examinations placed on reserve with the library by professors since 1990. If there are sample answers on reserve, these answers will be linked to the appropriate examination. Some exams will require a password for access that is available only from the professor of the course in question, but most do not.

Please note that professors are not required to post their exams on the exam database, and many choose not to do so. The library does not maintain any paper copies of exams. For questions regarding the exam database, contact John Heywood, Digital Media Librarian and Information Architect, at heywood@wcl.american.edu.

III. THE SECOND YEAR AND BEYOND

A. Graduation Requirements

Upper-Level Required Courses

During the second year of the part-time program, students take a maximum of thirteen semester hours of required courses (Constitutional Law and Criminal Procedure* in the fall; and Property and Legal Ethics* in the spring), and should have space for elective courses. (*These two courses may be completed during the first summer.)

Upper Level Writing Requirement

Students must complete and have certified an Upper Level Writing Requirement. The Upper Level Writing Requirement may be fulfilled through work on a journal, a seminar, course, or an independent study project. For more information, see: <http://www.wcl.american.edu/studentaffairs/writingreq.cfm>

Professional Skills Requirement

Students must successfully complete a course that includes substantial instruction in professional skills generally regarded as necessary for effective and responsible participation in the legal profession. These skills include, but are not limited to, trial and appellate advocacy, alternative methods of dispute resolution, counseling, interviewing, negotiating, factual investigation, organization and management of legal work, and drafting. Applicable courses may be found on the web under the Office of the Registrar.

Residency Requirement

Part-time J.D. students must successfully complete degree requirements in a minimum of 8 semesters (or the equivalent) of 8 or greater successfully completed hours each semester. For more details on the residency requirements, see the WCL Academic Planning Guide or contact the Office of the Registrar.

For part-time students who complete all their academic work at WCL, fulfillment of the residency requirement is in question only if they drop below eight credits in any semester, want to graduate in fewer than eight semesters, or transfer between divisions (*i.e.*, from part-time to full-time, and vice versa). Students who wish to transfer between divisions must obtain the written permission of the dean of students, and should consult the Office of the Registrar to determine the effect a shift will have on their future credit-hour loads and number of semesters required by these requirements.

Remaining Requirements

The J.D. program requires that students complete a minimum of 86 semester hours, including all required courses, with a GPA of 2.0 (C) or better. In addition, graduating students must have a zero account balance and no pending honor code charges.

B. Registration for the Second Year

In the spring semester of the first year, the Office of Student Affairs conducts a series of academic advising sessions, including a session for part-time students, to explain graduation requirements and to provide general advice on the upper-level curriculum. A series of subject-area-based sessions are also hosted by faculty. Students will also receive an academic advising guide that includes in printed format much of the information provided in the sessions discussed above.

Prior to the start of the registration period, the Office of the Registrar will publish the course schedule for the following semester both online and in print. Courses may be added to or dropped from the schedule. Information on the registration process is made available to students through MyWCL well in advance of the registration period. Registration is conducted online through myau.american.edu. For more information on the registration process, contact the Office of the Registrar.

C. Electives

Generally, students take one of two approaches to planning their academic careers. Some students take a wide variety of courses so as to be exposed to an array of potential practice areas, while others choose to graduate from law school with a strong background in a particular legal specialization. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive. A student who is fairly sure that he/she would like to work in a specific area of law would take the courses in that field or related to that field, but would still have time to take some courses in other areas that are of interest. Important considerations in planning the upper class curriculum are explained below.

Prerequisites

A glance at the course offerings often shows multiple sections of several courses: Business Associations; Sales and Secured Transactions; Wills, Trusts & Estates; Federal Personal Income Tax; and Evidence. Most of these courses are often prerequisites for more advanced courses or clinics, such as Securities Regulation; Seminar in Regulation of Securities Markets; Business Planning; Estate and Gift Tax; Corporate Tax; Partnership Tax; Tax Policy; Advanced Evidence; Clinics; and Civil and Criminal Trial Advocacy.

Best advice: Concentrate in the second, and fall semester of the third, years on courses that are formal prerequisites for more advanced courses in a particular area so that pursuit of the advanced courses in the third and fourth years is not inhibited. Then, spread out the remaining first-level electives that are bar-related and reflect traditional notions of what a lawyer's general substantive knowledge should be based on their availability in each remaining semester. Remember to avoid "loading up" on too many courses just because they appear on bars. Students need to assess their interests and individual levels of risk tolerance. However, don't delay taking all "bar-related" courses until the final year, or they will be over-represented in the fourth year and a student will be less able to make any mid-course corrections that may be necessary or desirable.

Balancing Different Types of Classes

Student preferences for seminars or exam classes vary. Those who prefer seminars note that they allow deeper learning in an area of specific interest to the student, more selective reading, a smaller class size, no exam, and valuable practice in legal writing and public speaking. Seminars also provide an opportunity to work more closely with faculty and may allow students to obtain a favorable reference. Finally writing, and perhaps publishing, a high-quality seminar paper is an excellent way to demonstrate one's legal analysis and writing skills to potential employers.

Bar Courses

In general, students should not take a course solely because it is a topic that will be tested on the bar exam. Students worried about preparing for the bar exam should know that most of the subjects tested on the Multistate Bar Exam (used in all 50 states except Louisiana and Washington) are covered by the required courses at WCL, including Contracts, Torts, Constitutional Law, Real Property, and Criminal Law and Procedure. Evidence is the only subject on the Multistate Bar Exam that is not a required course at WCL.

Most state exams also include essay questions that focus on jurisdiction-specific topics, such as rules of state procedure. Although familiarity with such topics gained through coursework is helpful, the vast majority of preparation for the bar occurs in bar review courses.

Take-Home Exams

As with other aspects of law school, preference for take-home exams varies among students. While take-home exams give students an opportunity to write a more lucid piece of legal analysis, they also can turn into endurance tests. In general, students should prepare for a take-home exam as they would for any other exam: Outline the course before picking up the exam so it is not a temptation to complete the outline within the time allotted for the exam.

Clinics

Part-time students have always been welcome in the WCL clinical program. Every semester, there are part-time students enrolled in many of the WCL clinics. However, these students have the flexibility in their work schedules to allow them to attend seminar meetings during the normal work day and to fulfill client-related demands in the daytime. Since this is not possible for many part-time students, especially those who work full-time during the day, an evening section of the Civil Practice Clinic (CPC) is specifically targeted at part-time students. This section is a one-semester clinic in which third- and fourth-year students represent low-income clients in areas such as bankruptcy, consumer, family law, health, housing, public benefits, and special education. Student attorneys use a range of legal skills on behalf of clients in settings that may include administrative tribunals and trial courts in the District of Columbia. Student attorneys represent low-income clients in two-person teams. The teams ordinarily represent two clients at a time. To the extent possible, the caseload reflects areas of special interest to the student attorney teams.

Students also participate in a weekly seminar. Topics such as client-centered representation, client interviews, theory of the case, fact investigation, counseling, and negotiation are considered. These practice areas are analyzed through consideration of lawyering approaches reflected in popular films and other fact patterns. In addition, through simulation exercises, students have an opportunity to practice lawyering skills in settings in which client interests are not jeopardized. Student attorneys also share developments and issues in their cases with other students during case rounds. The development in each team's cases expose the other students to topics that may not arise in their own cases, and discussion of issues help student attorneys grapple with ethical and other practice matters and concerns.

Students should be prepared to commit four hours a week to clinic activities for each hour of clinic credit (or a total of 10-12 hours per week for client representation). The caseload is kept small to permit students to reflect on their experiences, but is large enough to provide students with a meaningful context for these reflections. Because part-time students have very different degrees of work flexibility and other demands, client demands and case opportunities are tailored to the students registered each semester. A limited number of students may be given the opportunity to register for credit for an additional semester.

Professional Skills Classes

A number of courses provide simulated litigation experiences in which students receive intensive personal feedback from an experienced practitioner. Part-time students unable to take advantage of WCL's clinical program may take a course that includes learning how to draft complaints and motions, how to deliver opening statements and closing arguments, how to conduct direct and cross examination, and how to introduce exhibits into evidence. The courses most focused on providing this kind of experience are Civil Trial Advocacy and Criminal Trial Advocacy. Sections of these courses are offered in the evening.

In addition, students should consider honing their problem-solving skills by taking a course or seminar in alternative dispute resolution. Alternative Dispute Resolution and Lawyer Bargaining are two of several courses that provide opportunities to develop these skills. One or more of these courses may be offered in the summer session, and it is easier to obtain a seat in these high-demand courses in the summer session.

Finally, a number of other courses and seminars offer an opportunity to develop professional skills. These include Appellate Advocacy, Business Planning, and legal drafting classes. For more information on the professional-skills classes offered, consult the WCL Course Catalog.

D. Credits per Semester

To graduate in four years, part-time students must average a little more than 10 credits in their upper-class semesters and must carry 11 credits in at least one semester to avoid summer school. Many part-time students attend at least one summer session to decrease their course load during the academic year. Typical class schedules of 8-11 credits will consist of class meetings four evenings per week. (NOTE: a minimum of six credits each semester is required to be eligible for federal student loans).

E. Taking a Heavy Course Load

Decisions on when to take a heavy course load vary from one individual to the next. Some students prefer to take a heavier load at the beginning of their academic careers, preserving the option to have a light load in the 4th year, or graduate after seven semesters and two summers. Other students find they need a lighter load their second year to restore balance to their life. If students are unsure how heavy a course load they want to take in the coming year, they will protect their options if they schedule a full course load. Classes may be dropped easily during the add/drop period, but some classes will fill before the semester begins, thus limiting students' opportunities to add them to their class schedules.

F. Graduating Early

To fulfill WCL's residency requirement in fewer than eight semesters, part-time students must take a minimum of eight credits per semester for seven semesters and attend two summer sessions totaling eight or more credits. See the next section for more information on the summer session. Keep in mind that most law firm recruiting programs are structured to hire associates to begin in the fall. Part-time students do succeed in finding opportunities in January, but should speak with Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD) counselors about this issue if they intend to graduate in seven semesters.

G. Taking Courses Outside the Part-Time Division

Day Courses

Upper-level part-time students may enroll in as many day courses as they like or are able to.

Non-Law Courses

With written permission from the Office of the Registrar, J.D. students may earn up to six credits from other schools of the university. Typically, the courses allowed for transfer of credits are graduate-level courses. Only the credit hours, and not the grades, earned from these courses are accepted for credit towards J.D. degree requirements. For more information, contact the Office of the Registrar or see the WCL Catalog.

Courses at Other Law Schools

Students who wish take courses at other law schools must obtain written permission in advance from the Registrar. Only the credit hours, and not the grade, earned from these courses will be transferred and noted on the student's permanent transcript. For more information, consult the WCL Catalog.

H. Summer Sessions

At WCL

The on-campus summer session runs from the end of May through the end of July. Many popular courses are held in the evenings, with the assumption that most students, whether full-time or part-time, work during the day. A variety of courses are offered during the summer session, including the upper-class required courses Legal Ethics and Criminal Procedure, and upper-class electives such as Evidence and Business Associations. The actual courses offered from year to year vary.

The number of credits needed to receive federal financial assistance for the summer session is six, and students may take up to seven credits each summer session. Students who want to preserve the ability to graduate in seven semesters and two summer sessions typically take one four-credit course each of two summer sessions.

The summer class schedule is published mid-spring semester. The schedule may be accessed through WCL's website or on myau.american.edu.

At Another Institution

With written approval of the Registrar, students may take courses at other approved law schools. Only the credits hours earned from these classes, and not the grades, will be transferred to the student's permanent transcript at WCL. For more information, see the WCL Catalog.

Law students also may earn up to 6 credits of work toward their J.D. degree requirements in other schools of the university, provided that they demonstrate the appropriateness of the particular course and obtain in

advance the written approval of the Registrar. For more information on taking courses at other law schools or other schools of the university, see the WCL Catalog.

Study Abroad

WCL offers a variety of study abroad programs, either during the fall and spring semesters or during the summer. In addition, students may attend study abroad programs run by other ABA-approved law schools. To do so, a student must request and be granted permission from the Registrar. Visit <http://www.wcl.american.edu/studyabroad> for additional information.

I. Shifting Divisions

Part-time students may request transfer to the full-time program beginning in the spring semester of their first year. Students who wish to shift to the full-time division must obtain the permission from the Office of the Registrar. In addition, prior to transferring divisions, students must meet with Dean Jaffe to discuss the consequential change in residency requirements, the student's plans for adjusting her/his professional workload (if applicable), and other related issues. For more information, visit <http://www.wcl.american.edu/studentaffairs/divisional.cfm> or see the WCL Catalog.

IV. FINANCIAL AID

Information regarding various types of financial aid and the application process is available online at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/finaid/>. The website also explains federal and institutional aid requirements.

Remember, applications for aid must be submitted **every year**, including a renewal FAFSA, Stafford Loan renewal, and commercial loan applications.

A. Aid for the Summer

A large percentage of students enrolled in summer school are part-time students. Thus, the financial aid policies that affect summer study are of particular interest to part-time students.

While considering how many credits to take for the summer, students should keep these details in mind:

- Federal regulations dictate that federal funds for summer study are available only to students taking six or more credits. Thus, students who take only five credits during the summer will have to either pay out-of-pocket or borrow from the few private lenders that lend to students enrolled less than half-time.
- Students who are thinking about applying for loans to cover the costs of summer school should contact the Office of Financial Aid in early March for details and deadlines.
- Students may borrow up to \$20,500 of federal funds every two semesters. Students may adjust the timing of their financial aid application to cover a summer and the following fall to achieve eligibility for summer funding. Doing so, however, affects the timing of future applications and loan disbursements. Consult the Office of Financial Aid for details.

B. Federal Work-Study Program

Part-time students may be eligible for Federal Work Study Program funds. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for more information.

C. Money Saving Tips

Borrow Only For School-Related Expenses

Most part-time students, even those who are working, can qualify for loans in excess of tuition and books. Because these loans are readily available, part-time students sometimes use them to enhance their lifestyles while in school. Using historical commercial loan interest rates, every \$1 borrowed will cost over \$2 in repayment. Don't borrow just because "it's there." Financial aid counselors are available to review borrowing and general spending plans for four years to familiarize students with their overall debt and repayment plans, so as to avoid being surprised by loan debt at graduation. Students also can devise a plan by using the calculators at www.accessgroup.org.

Pay Interest While in School

Interest on commercial loans not paid while a student is in school is subject to capitalization (addition to the principal of the loan). Some lenders capitalize interest as often every three months, resulting in interest charges being assessed on not only the principal balance of the loan, but also the unpaid interest charges.

Even if a lender is not capitalizing interest while students are in school, it is a good idea either to prepay the commercial loan interest if financial resources available, or to reduce subsequent semester commercial-loan borrowing.

Discounted Books

Shop around for the best price on new and used texts and consider selling books back at the end of the semester. The bookstore buys back used books on an ongoing basis. This works much like it did in undergraduate school: Students get the most money for books that a faculty member has committed to using the following semester. In addition, student-initiated book exchanges have occurred in prior years, so watch for information regarding this possibility.

Student Discounts

By using the student ID for discounts, students can save money at the movies, hair salons, for purchase of computer hardware and software, and many other places. In addition, EagleBucks also provides a convenient and cashless method to pay at both on- and off-campus area businesses, including Einstein's Bagels, McDonald's, and Subway. EagleBucks also provides discounts when used at on-campus businesses. Additional EagleBucks information is at: <https://www.eaglebucks.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>.

V. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In the spring of their first year, part-time students also make important decisions about the kinds of activities they will pursue in their upper-class years, such as competing for a position on law journals, competing on moot court teams, and working as a Dean's Fellow. These activities are explained in further detail below.

A. Law Review and Journals

There are numerous student-run journals at WCL, including *The American University Law Review*; *The American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy, & the Law*; *The American University International Law Review*; *The Administrative Law Review*; and the *Business Law Review*. A brief description of each of the journals can be found in the WCL Catalog or at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/pub.cfm/>. Each journal has an office on campus, and staff members are typically happy to talk to students about their experience.

A listing of other student-run publications at WCL can be found at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/pub.cfm/>.

Write-On Competition and Grade-On Process

Part-time students, like full-time students, can gain membership on the journals in two ways: the Short Write-On Competition ("SWO") in the spring, and the Grade-On process in the summer. SWO is the primary way to become a member of a journal, and students may compete only once. Part-time students can choose to compete either in their first year or their second year of law school. Therefore, a first-year part-time student who chooses not to compete in the write-on competition during the first year may still compete in the second year. One upper-level student suggests that part-time students compete in the SWO during their second year, since (a) they may grade-on in the summer after their first year, and (b) by their second year, they will have had a full year of Legal Rhetoric under their belt before competing.

During SWO, students are asked to prepare a casenote using only the sources provided by the journals at the beginning of the competition. Each journal evaluates the submissions separately, but the four general categories of evaluation for all journals are legal analysis, organization, style, and endnote development. Because SWO is sponsored by all five journals, it affords students the opportunity to prepare one paper for consideration by all the journals of their choice.

Another means of obtaining membership on a journal is the Grade-On process. During this process, the journals accept new members based solely on academic performance during the first year of law school. Students interested in "grading on" are asked to rank the five journals in the summer. Starting with the student with the highest grade point average, students are paired with journals of their choice until all spots on that journal are filled. At that time, students are paired with the second, third, or fourth choice until all journals have filled the number of spots designated for the Grade-On process.

Journal Membership

Journals are primarily student-run, although many receive substantial help from faculty advisors. In general, the journals publish articles, essays, book reviews, and student comments and notes. All of the journals also sponsor academic symposia and conferences where professors, practitioners, and experts in the field are

invited to speak, debate, and facilitate discussion.

Participation on a journal is a two-year commitment. All journals provide substantial research and writing experience for their student members. Accordingly, each student member of a journal is required to complete an individual student casenote or comment, which is a substantive piece of legal writing that meets the journal's standards of publication. This will typically fulfill the law school's upper level writing requirement as well. In addition to writing a casenote or comment, student members are assigned to production tasks throughout the semester, which include source collecting, bluebooking, and cite-checking. In exchange for satisfactory journal work, students can earn two course credits per year of journal membership.

In addition to these activities, participation on a journal can provide a student with valuable leadership and managerial experience. In the spring of their first year of journal membership, journal members can run for editorial positions. Depending on the position, responsibilities may include selecting work for publication, soliciting submissions, organizing symposia or special events, managing the staff, or assisting in the administration of the journal. Students holding these editorial positions may earn four course credits during their second year of journal membership rather than the two course credits offered to regular staff members.

The Pros and Cons of Journal Membership

One main reason students join a journal is that it is viewed as an honor both within the law school and by the legal profession at large. A journal affiliation is a good resume addition and considered important by law firms and other legal employers. Moreover, it can be a significant networking tool.

Joining a law journal also provides additional experience and training in legal writing, editing, and research. Furthermore, it provides valuable exposure to current legal thinking and legal movements. Student editors also gain valuable management and planning experience and enjoy working on interesting scholarship with their colleagues on the journal and with WCL faculty.

One concern for part-time students is the amount of time required to participate in a journal. The decision to join a journal is different for each student. Members of the current staff of each journal are available to discuss the commitment and provide advice. Some part-time students have chosen to pursue only one extracurricular activity, whether it be law journal, Dean's Fellowship, or moot court. Students who choose not to join a journal may be interested in the discussion below of how to address this issue with employers. They may also contact a career counselor in the Office of Career and Professional Development (OCPD) to discuss their concerns.

B. Dean's Fellowships

Appointment as a Dean's Fellow provides a remitted tuition payment as compensation for research work with distinguished faculty or for assisting with classroom instruction in the Legal Rhetoric writing program. Appointments are secured through contact with faculty or program coordinators.

Positions of Dean's Fellowships are advertised on MyWCL by professors or departments seeking Dean's Fellows. The application process varies by professor or department, and application instructions are generally specified within the announcement.

C. Moot Court/Mock Trial

Participation in WCL's moot court or mock trial competitions is an excellent way to develop real-world litigation skills. This is a particularly valuable opportunity for part-time students, many of whom are unable to participate in a clinic. For more information, see <http://www.wcl.american.edu/org/mootcourt/> and <http://www.wcl.american.edu/org/mocktrial/>.

Participation policies for both the moot court and mock trial competitions can be found on <http://www.wcl.american.edu/studentaffairs/mootcourt.cfm>.

D. Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law

The Center for Human Rights & Humanitarian Law works with students, faculty, and the international legal community to provide support for human rights initiatives around the world. The Center creates opportunities for students, practitioners and activists through training, complementary education, outreach, workshops and conferences, and research and publications.

The Center's programs assist practitioners and law students in understanding the scope and practical implications of the human rights rules and mechanisms, whose applications affect people worldwide, through the implementation of various programs. Programs include the War Crimes Research Office, the Academy for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition, and the Human Rights Brief. Part-time students can get involved in the Center in a number of ways.

In addition, through the Academy for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, there is a summer program, which is an intensive, three-week program in the world to offer human rights courses in both English and Spanish. Every year, the Academy hosts over 25 visiting world-renowned scholars and activists who teach courses on topics including regional human rights approaches; the United Nations; international criminal tribunals; human rights and development; women's rights; terrorism and human rights; and international humanitarian law. As a Graduate Certificate Program, the summer program is open to lawyers, professionals in the human rights field, and law students, who can earn up to seven credits toward their degree. Because these classes are given during such a short period of time, part-time students have taken a week off from work and attended day and evening classes of the Academy for credit. This option leaves the rest of the summer open for part-time students to return to work without having to take classes for seven weeks, or to travel. For more information, please contact the Program Coordinator at hrcademy@wcl.american.edu or 202-274-4070.

Part-time students also can get involved in the Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition. The competition is the only tri-lingual moot court competition dedicated to the advancement of the Inter-American human rights legal system. It is conducted in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and it welcomes over 150 students and over 100 attorneys every year for legal education training, networking events, and

good fun. It is held each year at the end of May. Part-time students can get involved in the competition as a member of the WCL team or as a Dean's Fellow or volunteer. This is a great opportunity for bilingual students to engage with other like-minded Latin American law students from throughout the Hemisphere. For more information, please contact the Competition Coordinator at iamoot@wcl.american.edu or at 202-274-4215.

For more information on the Center, please see <http://www.wcl.american.edu/humright/center/history.cfm>. More information on the Academy is available on <http://www.wcl.american.edu/humright/hracademy/>.

E. Student Organizations

A list of the existing student organizations is available at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/org/>. Organizations are encouraged to schedule evening meetings and events to permit part-time students to participate. Part-time students should contact the leadership of any group in which they are interested; most student organizations will make a concerted effort to accommodate part-time students who want to be active participants in their organization.

The Student Bar Association

The Student Bar Association (SBA) is the student government of WCL. It is responsible for coordination of all student activities at the law school. It has an array of responsibilities, ranging from appropriating funds for nearly every student organization at the law school to voting on curriculum and faculty appointment decisions. For more information, please see <http://www.wcl.american.edu/sba/>.

Evening Law Students Association

The Evening Law Students Association (ELSA) is a student group that serves the special needs of part-time students and sponsors seminars, social events, and speakers scheduled with part-time students in mind. For more information, please see <http://www.wcl.american.edu/org/elsa/>.

VI. CAREER PLANNING

Part-time law students bring unique qualifications and a special set of skills to their careers. They are also used to extraordinary challenges. Many part-time students balance full time employment, legal studies, as well as personal and community commitments. One of the biggest challenges faced by part-time students is a lack of time to pursue opportunities that could enhance their competitiveness in the legal employment market. Career planning as early as possible will help students learn about legal opportunities, acquire legal experience, assess and define their goals and in the end, find a satisfying legal career.

One of the best and earliest steps students can take in their career planning is to meet with a counselor in the Office of Career & Professional Development (OCPD) to discuss particular situations and career goals. OCPD is committed to helping students with their individual needs and offers a variety of programs, services, and resources beneficial to part-time students.

A. Why Should a Part-Time Student Acquire Legal Experience?

While in law school, part-time students should try to obtain as much legal experience as possible. Such experience will enable students to be competitive when applying for positions. Although each employer is different, most will expect students to have worked in some type of law-related capacity during their law school years. At some point, most part-time students face the question of how to build practical legal skills. With some long term planning, many students have found creative ways to gain legal experience without sacrificing their current jobs.

B. How Should a Part-Time Student Get Legal Experience?

There are many ways part-time students can make themselves marketable to prospective legal employers. Possible options include: participating in a clinic, joining a law journal (especially if its subject matter is relevant to a student's career goals), working as a research assistant for a professor, volunteering, working as a judicial intern, attending career-related programs and job fairs, networking and conducting informational interviews, writing a publishable paper on a relevant topic, participating in moot court, taking courses geared toward the interests of the student, getting involved in the local bar association, and/or joining professional organizations.

C. When Do Legal Employers Interview Students for Summer/Permanent Positions?

The hiring timelines of legal employers are often predictable, although they vary depending on the type of employer. Large law firms typically hire summer associates who are one summer removed from graduation and at the end of the summer, often extend a permanent offer for an associate position. Students interested in these firms should try to spend their third summer gaining legal experience as chances of obtaining permanent legal employment with many employers will be enhanced by working with that employer during the summer. Smaller firms, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations follow a different model of hiring and thus working with them during the summer before graduation is not as crucial. These employers, however, place great value on relevant experience. Therefore, while in school, students should try to gain as much substantive legal experience as possible. Talk with an OCPD counselor about what employers of interest deem important. Detailed information on job search timelines can be found on the OCPD website (www.wcl.american.edu/career).

D. What Documents Are Necessary When Applying for a Legal Job?

As with many non-legal positions, most employers require a resume and cover letter. Legal employers, however, may also request a writing sample and transcript. The part-time student will want to modify his or her resume to highlight and emphasize the special skills and experiences that will most interest potential legal employers. Students can use a cover letter as an effective vehicle to communicate background and make a case why an employer should consider hiring him or her. A cover letter can be used to elaborate on the ways in which special skills and experience compliment the student's legal education making for a strong candidate. A part-time student should be prepared to address questions unique to his or her situation and future plans. A writing sample should be an example of legal writing exhibiting the analytical skills of the student (often times this is an assignment from Legal Rhetoric). If it is useful or necessary to use a sample from a job, permission must be granted from the employer ahead of time.

E. Do Extracurricular Activities Affect Employment Opportunities?

Extracurricular activities such as moot court, involvement in student groups, and law journal are often valued by employers. The importance placed on such activities varies greatly by employer. Students should discuss with an OCPD counselor the value a particular employer places on each of these activities. The importance of law journal membership is often a concern of part-time students. While some employers put a great deal of value on the experience, others give it little weight. If a student does not participate in a journal, the student should be prepared to tell an employer why and detail other ways in which legal research and writing skills have been obtained.

VII. BAR EXAMINATIONS

The Office of Student Affairs produces a booklet entitled, *You Want the Small Envelope*, available at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/studentaffairs/pamphlet.pdf?rd=1>. It provides comprehensive information about how to access what students need to know for bar admission. The best source of current information about bar admissions and requirements is the website of the National Conference of Bar Examiners at www.ncbex.org.

In addition, the Office of Student Affairs holds bar exam overview and prep sessions every spring semester for 2L and 3L students. Students are also welcome to meet with Dean of Student Affairs David Jaffe or Assistant Director Myra Wilder on an individual basis with questions relating to the bar admission process.

A. Registering for the Bar

Students should check the requirements early in their law school career of all the state Bars to which they may apply. It is the student's responsibility to check with the pertinent state Bar to ensure he/she meets all of its requirements, including application for accommodations, if applicable. Links to individual state bars are available through www.ncbex.org.

Certain state Bars, such as Florida, have lower fees for students who register during the first year of law school. In general, there is usually a financial penalty for failing to register as a student by a particular state's deadline.

B. Registering for a Bar Review Course

There are several benefits to registering for a bar review course well before graduation and sitting for the bar exam. Many bar review companies lock in their tuition rates for bar review courses when students put down a deposit. Students who are unsure which bar exam they will ultimately take should pick one, and the deposit and the locked-down deposit can be applied towards the tuition of any bar review course they ultimately take.

Bar/Bri and other bar exam representatives are on campus often and can be found outside the student lounge on the sixth floor.

NOTE: many law firms pay tuition for bar review courses for newly hired associates.

C. MPRE

Most states require the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) in addition to their state bar exam. Students typically take this exam during their final year of law school and after they have taken a course in Legal Ethics. The exam is usually given in March, August, and November. Applications can be found online at www.ncbex.org.

Appendix A: Office Hours by Department

DEPARTMENT/PHONE NUMBER	OFFICE HOURS
AU Book Store 202-885-6300	<p>Mon. – Thurs. 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Fri. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</p> <p>See store website for summer hours and hours during the first two weeks of classes at http://www.bkstr.com/Home/10001-10061-1?demoKey=s</p>
Cafeteria/Dining Hall 202-274-4280	<p>Mon. – Fri.</p> <p>Breakfast 8 a.m. – 10 a.m. Lunch 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Dinner 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Subject to closings for special events.</p>
Office of Career & Professional Development 202-274-4090	<p>Mon. & Thurs. 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Tues. & Wed. 9 a.m. – 7 p.m. Fri. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. First Sat. of the month 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.</p>
Office of Development & Alumni Relations 202-274-4050	<p>Mon. - Fri. 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.</p>
Externship Office 202-274-4200	<p>Mon. & Thurs. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tues. & Wed. 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Fri. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.</p>
Office of Financial Aid 202-274-4040	<p>Mon. - Fri. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday evening hours by appointment</p>
Pence Law Library 202-274-4350 (circulation desk)	<p>Mon. - Thurs. 8 a.m. – 12 a.m. Extended hours to 2 a.m. for WCL students</p> <p>Fri. 8 a.m. – 10 p.m. Extended hours to 12 a.m. for WCL students</p> <p>Sat. 9 a.m. – 10 p.m. Extended hours to 12 a.m. for WCL students</p>

	<p>Sun. 9 a.m. – 12 a.m. Extended hours to 2 a.m. for WCL students Open 24/7 to WCL students during reading period and exam weeks.</p>
<p>Office of the Registrar 202-274-4080</p>	<p>Mon. 9 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Tues. – Thurs. 9 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Fri. 9 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>Extended hours during the first week of classes are announced on MyWCL.</p>
<p>Office of Student Affairs 202-274-4030</p>	<p>Generally 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.</p> <p>Other evening hours also available by appointment</p>
<p>Student Computer Center 202-274-4361</p>	<p>Mon. – Thurs. 8 a.m. - 11:45 p.m. Fri 8 a.m. - 9:45 p.m. Sat 9 a.m. - 9:45 p.m. Sun 10 a.m. - 11:45 p.m.</p>

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

How do I balance work, career and family?

Time management and self-discipline are essential to surviving through law school. Students cannot keep the life that they had prior to law school and expect to just add law school in with their daily life without making any changes. Law school requires time and energy, and both become precious resources while in law school. Discuss all of this with family and employer, and ask these people for support. Be flexible and realize that there is always an adjustment period when changes occur.

Everyone approaches the school-work-life balance differently. A good way to approach this balance is to make a detailed schedule for yourself and do your best to stick to it. Planning personal or family time into your schedule will substantially increase the likelihood that you will have that time available as scheduled. Making *ad hoc* decisions about your schedule, or relying on having free time by chance, can be dangerous. Smart and efficient work is the way to go.

What can I do when I start to feel overwhelmed with work, school and family?

There are numerous resources at your disposal. First, you might visit your professors during their office hours to share your concerns. Sometimes, a quick conversation with a professor about an area of law you are struggling to understand will result in better understanding than hours of studying on your own. Second, if you are not comfortable discussing feelings of being overwhelmed with your professors, your Integrated Curriculum Dean's Fellows are a great resource for questions and concerns. If they are not able to provide the answers you need, they certainly can refer you to someone who can. Finally, the Office of Student Affairs always is available to answer your questions and help you work through your difficulties.

What type of assistance is there for me in adjusting to law school?

The SBA matches up each new student with a student-mentor, who may be aware of available resources at the law school. In addition, you may also contact ELSA for assistance. For more serious matters of a personal nature, contact Student Affairs. Counselors are available to help. The study of law can be strenuous. If students feel themselves starting to lose interest in their studies, lose interest in their personal life, experience long periods of sadness or a lack of energy, and/or show other signs of depression, they should not hesitate to get the help that is available.

Who do I contact if I have a problem or concern with the law school?

ELSA's primary role is to assist part-time in solving problems that occur with the law school. ELSA is able to direct students to the appropriate administration official. In addition, students with problems and concerns

about WCL may also contact ELSA's primary contact person, Myra Wilder, Assistant Director in the Office of Student Affairs, at mwilder@wcl.american.edu or 202-274-4031. Also available for assistance is Associate Dean for Student Affairs David Jaffe. Student Affairs provides many kinds of support for the WCL community, including advising on course selection and academic planning and providing referrals to other faculty members for counsel in particular practice areas. The Office of Student Affairs not only provides personal, confidential counseling, but also offers access to a wide network of other services for additional support. The Office of Student Affairs maintains extended office hours and organizes events to meet the particular interests and needs of evening students.

What do I do if my work requires me to travel and I won't be able to attend classes for several days?

Students are expected by the ABA standards and WCL policy to attend 75% of their classes. However, if you need to miss a class or several classes, make sure to give your professors as much notice as possible. While professors usually will not record classes for your later review unless your absence is for a religious holiday or medical or family emergency, they will make themselves available to discuss the material you miss during their office hours or by appointment. If you have to miss class, keep up with the reading and visit your professors as soon as possible upon your return to discuss the cases that you missed.

Students should also talk to their employer and co-workers and see if a "trade" of work schedule can be worked out where the travel assignment can be scheduled on a school break or over a Friday – Monday weekend.

Are part-time students at a disadvantage because it is more difficult to participate in internships and clinics like the full-time students?

Absolutely not. All of the opportunities at WCL are open to all students. Occasionally, you may run into problems finding time in your schedule for such activities, but it is not impossible. To the extent your career and family obligations allow you to take on an internship or clinical position, they can be great learning experiences. However, even if you do not find time to participate in an internship, for-credit externship, or clinical program, evening students are not necessarily at any disadvantage compared to full-time students. In fact, your varied work experience might even make you a better student and lawyer than a law student fresh from their undergraduate experience.