

BAYLOR LAW MISSION STATEMENT

Baylor Law Mission Statement

Baylor Law School strives, in the context of a Christian commitment, to integrate excellence in teaching and scholarship to develop lawyers who are able to practice law with competence, serve with compassion, and provide effective and ethical leadership.

Baylor Law Core Values

1. Excellence in Teaching within a Supportive Environment

A student-focused legal education requires a diverse faculty of excellent teachers and a dedicated and energetic staff who collectively make students their top priority. Doing so ensures that Baylor Law School takes full advantage of the valuable opportunity, provided by three critical developmental years, to make a difference in students' lives, and thereby in the lives of their future clients, the life of their communities, and the health and well-being of the legal profession and the public at large.

Promoting a culture of excellence and high expectations in students requires that teachers set high standards for student performance, that those standards be precisely and repeatedly articulated, and that students learn to be self-directed while meeting those high standards.ⁱ

2. Meaningful Scholarship

Meaningful scholarship serves an important role in a student-focused legal education that is designed ultimately to serve the public and the profession. It serves the law school's mission when it informs teaching excellence or makes a substantial contribution to the legal profession.ⁱⁱ

3. Professionalism

A central principle of Baylor's Professional School Model for transforming students into professionals is to cultivate students' respect for the legal profession, the rule of law, and the justice system, and an appreciation of the diverse society in which they will contribute. This focus on professionalism emphasizes competence, civility, high ethical standards, servant-leadership, work ethic, personal integrity, responsibility, accountability, inclusiveness, and courage required by the actual practice of law.ⁱⁱⁱ

4. Service

A student-focused training ground designed to prepare graduates to enter a service-oriented profession should inspire its graduates to become servant-leaders and equip them to be effective in that role. This focus is particularly suited to a law school that is part of a University dedicated to a global Christian mission. Baylor Law School is therefore committed to inspiring a passion for service—to clients, to an increasingly diverse society, and to the profession.^{iv}

3. Training students to acquire fundamental legal skills, and critiquing student performance of those skills, including legal research and writing, alternate methods of dispute resolution, working collaboratively, client counseling, negotiation, transactional planning and drafting, and trial and appellate advocacy;
4. Modeling and fostering professionalism, especially legal ethics, civility, work ethic, responsibility, accountability, personal character, integrity working collaboratively as part of a team, and treating others with dignity and respect;
5. Highlighting the important role of the legal profession and the rule of law's contribution to justice, freedom, and equality, and the challenges to making timely and affordable public access to "justice to all" a reality.

Meaningful scholarship advances knowledge and the understanding of law and legal institutions, including underlying policies, processes and their impact. At Baylor, we recognize and value a wide range of research, writing and other scholarly activities. A paradigm of the "co-inherence"—where teaching, research, and service, done well, co-exist and inform one another— is foundational. Thoughtful subject-matter exploration generates research, scholarship and engaging, dynamic classroom discussion which collectively serve as a training ground for the ambiguity students will experience beyond graduation.

At Baylor Law School, the emphasis on professionalism is both organic and intentional throughout the curriculum and in the array of extracurricular offerings, and through required professional development activities that begin at orientation and continue until graduation.

A servant-leader is best equipped to lead if trained to be a highly skilled, highly motivated, and creative problem-solver. A servant-leader understands that the commitment to service extends beyond clients to their communities, in which lawyers live and work, to the legal profession, the rule of law and the justice system. Service to clients transcends technical legal representation and advice. It includes a sincere compassion for those in need of legal services and seeing and treating them as human beings and not just legal issues or a source of income.

Service to the community may take the form of offering legal expertise, or, e.g., making a meaningful commitment of time to serve on the board of a non-profit or coach a children's soccer team. Service to the legal profession may take the form, e.g., of participating in the local, state, or national bar activities, giving CLE lectures, serving on committees proposing changes to legal rules, testifying before a legislative committee, eagerly accepting *pro bono* cases, or speaking on legal topics to civic organizations, and requires modeling upright behavior in all endeavors. A lawyer with a heart for service recognizes that the lens through which most of the public views the courts, the legal profession, and the rule of law is the ever-present opportunity to observe how lawyers live their lives and share their talents and training.

10.17.19 unanimously approved by Baylor Law Faculty

Excellent teaching has many facets, including:

1. Skilled use of the Socratic method to teach students how to read case law and statutory law critically, and how to analyze legal issues and communicate solutions with precision;
2. Drawing on professional experience and academic expertise to teach students the structure, the theory, and the practical intricacies of substantive and procedural law;