Widener University

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JURIST Academy Journal

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Diversity in the Legal Profession: Facts and Fiction

- According to the ABA, only 22.1% of all recipients of *juris doctorate* degrees identified themselves as members of minority groups in 2009.
- Approximately 35% of all Americans now recognized themselves as members of a racial or ethnic minority group, and that percentage continues to increase.
- Research indicates that new attorneys of color are more likely than their young White colleagues to provide legal services in urban areas, become civically engaged, work in a public c interest law practice, and offer *pro bono* (free) legal services.
- Demographics in America reflects a 13-20% gap in the number of minority attorneys available to advocate for the members of racial and ethnic minority groups, represent minority-owned business, and serve in leaders within our communities of color.

The JURIST Academy Vision and Values

JURIST Academy of Widener University School of Law is proud to demonstrate both innovation and, of course, excellence in educational diversity pipeline programming.

In response to the underrepresentation of ethnic/racial minorities in the legal profession, Vice Provost and Law School Dean Linda L. Ammons first initiated JURIST Academy in 2008 to increase law school applications, admissions and, yes, academic success among members of those groups that are underrepresented in the legal profession.

Widener University School of Law - Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

We are pleased that JURIST Academy furthers the Widener University mission as a leading metropolitan university by creating a learning pipeline to the legal profession where curricula are connected to societal issues through civic engagement and professional values.

Alumni Corner: 2011 JURIST Academy Student Accepts Admission to Widener Law School

JURIST Academy is pleased to announce its first session in 2011 yielded an outstanding law student for Widener - Andre Mason.

Andre graduated from York College after attending the Harrisburg Campus of JURIST Academy. We are proud of him!

2012 Official Sponsors

Triquetra Law
Appeals - Civil Rights - Employment law

Keystone Bar Association

Pathways Law and Justice Careers Program
A Project of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities

Widener University School of Law seeks sponsors for its third JURIST Academy - Harrisburg Campus. It is a program to improve full access to legal education and careers among the members of historically underrepresented groups. Please contact Ashley Barton for information on giving at Widener: 717.541.3974 or email anbarton@widener.edu.

Central Penn College Dual Level Sponsorship

Central Penn College is proud to be a lead sponsor of Widener's JURIST Academy. It's mission to diversify law schools and the legal profession is closely aligned with Central Penn's core values. Central Penn College has historically served as an institution that promotes diversity and opportunity; over 50% of Central Penn's student body consists of racial minorities.

As a full-time faculty member and student advisor in the Central Penn College Legal Studies Program, I can truly attest to the value of JURIST Academy in preparing our promising college students for the competitive process of law school admissions.

Before exposure to JURIST Academy, many students do not realize the academic discipline that is required for law school success. I have encountered students who don't have realistic goals for entering law school until we begin to plan for admission to JURIST Academy. In this aspect, JURIST Academy serves an important first step to law school.

"Jurist Academy serves as an important first step to law school."

Professor Randi Teplitz
Pre-law Advisor
Central Penn College
2011-2012 Sponsor

Central Penn Professor Randi Teplitz with 2011 JURIST Academy alumni Janira Rivera and Eric Cousar

2012 JURIST Academy Alumni Sharae Williams and Krystal Pedula

Widener's JURIST Academy embraces diversity in authentic and all-encompassing ways. By considering race, gender, poverty, and other potential barriers, Widener Law JURIST Academy provides opportunity to those students who are often excluded from our court and government systems. By recognizing the potential of students underrepresented in law schools, JURIST Academy provides a realistic path for these students to obtain law school admission and also recognizes the inherent value-added to the classroom, the profession, and our society when we can broaden opportunities for all.

More colleges and universities should join Central Penn to be leading sponsors of JURIST Academy. Law firms, businesses, government agencies, non-profits and bar associations must partner with us.

We all benefit from diversity!

Sharae Williams, JURIST Academy Class of 2012

On the first day of Widener Law School's JURIST Academy, I didn't know what to expect. However, that changed immediately at exactly 8:30 am, and from that point on, the class knew the expectations.

The schedule filled the entire day with courses, workshops, field trips and mentors. Initially, I was actually overwhelmed. After all, I was thrown into the simulated law school experience in a matter of minutes.

For some, this may seem extreme. My classmates were ready and we could not wait to begin the experience. As I looked around the room, I felt the same enthusiasm from the other students. It truly was refreshing and reassuring that this group of minorities had the same energy and objectives that I possessed – getting accepted to law school. We were now ready to learn to - as Professor Williams told us - "Think Like a Lawyer," prepare for the LSAT, and develop lawyering skills and values.

Completing the Jurist Academy was not easy, but it was worth the experience. As promised, I learned to "Think Like a Lawyer," and prepare for my law school experience.

JURIST Academy of Widener Law School provided me with a support system for navigating law school admission!

Nadya Cheatham, JURIST Academy Class of 2011

Attending JURIST Academy at Widener Law School confirmed my desires of going to law school. Before the rigorous program, law school was a mere thought that I had not put much effort into making a true reality. However, my time here proved to be beneficial to my future endeavors.

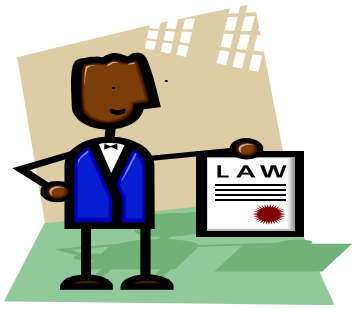
This program models a student's first year in law school. We attended classes taught by some of the best professors at Widener Law School.

Overall, JURIST Academy was a wonderful learning experience that has opened my eyes to the rewarding challenges of the legal world. I will definitely consider Widener University of Law School when pursuing legal education!

JURIST Academy Recruitment Tips:

- Tell your college-aged relatives and neighbors about JURIST Academy.
- Download the new 2013 JURIST Academy Brochure and Application today!
- Visit us on the web now at http://law.widener.edu/juristacademy
- Inform your community or faith-based organizations about JURIST Academy.
- Remind your sorority and fraternity "family" to spread the word about JURIST Academy.

Like us on Facebook



JURIST Academy Class of 2012 visiting Rhoads & Sinon in Harrisburg (l to r):

Michelle Tsang, John Jay College

Krystal Padula, Central Penn

Kimmberle Stowe, Millersville Un.

Maiza Rahman, Elizabethtown College

Marquis Bey, Lebanon Valley College

Shantae Albro, Penn State University

Sharae Williams, Central Penn College

Widener University

School of Law

JURIST Academy

Preview of 2013

We're on the web!

law.widener.edu/juristacademy

We are planning an exciting JURIST Academy class for 2013! We have revitalized the LSAT prep module to ensure that all JURIST Academy students have a competitive edge when taking this exam!

This year, we will offer greater incentives for JURIST Academy participants to become more competitive for scholarships with earlier law school applications and higher LSAT scores.

New Law Student Mentors will share with valuable experience as first year law students!

Professor Lee will return to the Jurist Academy faculty to teach Torts, while Professor Cliatt will one again enlighten the classroom with criminal law theory and principles. Professor Williams has planned new logic, legal reasoning, and critical thinking exercises to sharpen skills that enable students to "think like a lawyer."

JURIST Academy 2013 will be the best yet!

Thank you for your support!

Starla J. Williams
Assistant Professor of Legal Methods
Program Director - Harrisburg Campus

2012 Jurist Academy with the Honorable Bernard Coates

Experiential Learning at the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas