

# Academic Enhancement Program

## CORE PROGRAMS & ESSENTIAL VALUES

The Academic Enhancement Program is at the heart of student support and community outreach at Lewis & Clark Law School. During AEP's long history, its programs and mission grew and changed with the needs of the student base. Starting with a 1975 memorandum produced by the Minority Law Students Association, the model encourages the admission of underrepresented ethnic groups and the support of their academic success. The faculty created and implemented a program for incoming students that has evolved over the years to the present program.

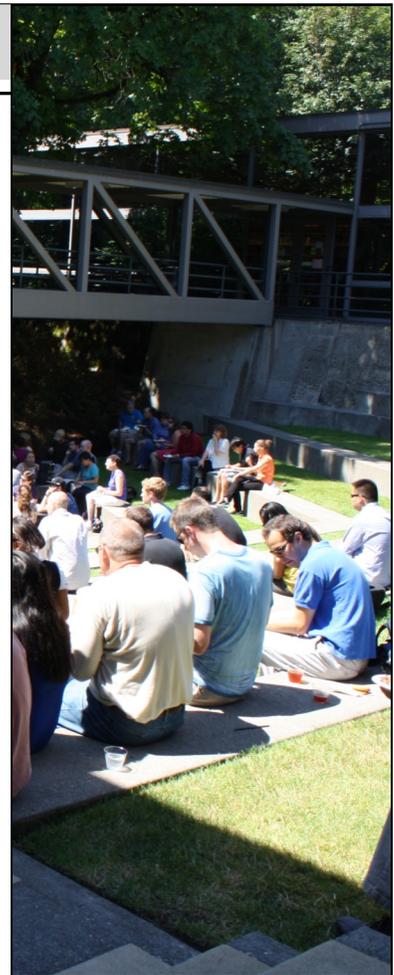
AEP's approach and scope broadened over the years to include a wider base of underrepresented groups in the legal profession. The focus includes ethnic minorities and students of color; students with learning differences or disabilities; international students; returning students, those from a non-traditional or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, and students from an underrepresented gender or sexual orientation in the legal profession. While focused on these groups, the program is available to any student who is willing to make a commitment to participation.

The school has continually refined the programs in order to identify areas for growth and assessment, and to ensure accountability in the Lewis & Clark model and programs.

### THE MISSION

The Academic Enhancement Program strives to employ data-driven techniques to help underrepresented groups, applicants, and students successfully make their way into the legal profession. AEP focuses on providing avenues for success in four areas:

- Admission
- Acclimation
- Acquisition of skills
- Admission to the Bar



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## SUMMER INSTITUTE—EARLY AUGUST

The Summer Institute is the first and most intense element of the Academic Enhancement Program. The Institute is open to all students by application, with an emphasis on those admitted through the AEP admissions committee and those from diverse groups. Admission to the Summer Institute is limited to 40 students. Broadly defined, it is an introduction to the skills, culture and expectations of law school. Students have the opportunity in this program to learn about resources at the law school, college, and in the community to facilitate their academic and professional success. They take part in skills instruction by Assistant Dean JB Kim, legal analysis workshops, and class simulations with professors culminating in a real exam experience and debrief. Participants are given an opportunity to make course load changes and curriculum decisions with advice and input from Assistant Dean J.B. Kim and a student panel.

The program features an opportunity to network with alumni over lunch downtown and to mingle with staff and faculty at a law school barbecue. In addition to skills, acclimatization activities, relationship building, and law school practice opportunities, students are able to experience firsthand the support and effort invested in their success.

# Core Programs

## BAR PASSAGE

Traditionally, the Academic Enhancement Program has offered bar support and second-attempt support on a personal and small group, by-invitation basis. This support has focused on teaching and modeling skills to pass the MEE, MBE, and MPT sections of the bar exam. Due to limited staff and resources this support has stayed small and largely “under the radar”.

However, for the first time in early 2011 at the behest of the Bar Support Work Group and the Dean’s Office, AEP piloted a more comprehensive Bar Passage Program. Much like J.B. Kim’s original approach, this was not a substantive law course. Instead, this program focused on exam-taking skills and practice. This pilot project, although small, resulted in an impressive pass rate among participating students, including second-time takers. The Dean and the Bar Pass Work Group are currently planning to offer the program again in January 2012.

## WORKSHOPS & CENTERING

The Academic Enhancement Program provides a total of six workshops and centering sessions throughout the academic year geared to the needs of first-year students. The workshops take place in the fall and are open to all ILs. Assistant Dean JB Kim coaches students on outlining and exam skills, as well as learning styles, time management, and ideal study techniques for law school. First-year students often take these workshops as an opportunity to express and work through fears and stresses by discussing their expectations and seeking confirmation or correction on what to expect.

The centering sessions cover similar material but are tailored specifically to the needs of the AEP cohort formed during the Summer Institute. In addition to the fall sessions that parallel the general workshops, there are two centering sessions scheduled every spring semester that address curriculum planning, stress management, reevaluation and enhancement of learning approaches based on first-semester grades. These sessions are designed to enhance a sense of community within the AEP cohort, and to allow for a more personal dialogue about issues, anxieties, and obstacles during the first year of law school than in the general workshop sessions.



*2011 Summer Law Camp—The Honorable Judge Jean Maurer with King School 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.*

## SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

The AEP Fellows Program prepares 8-10 law student TAs to lead structured skill-building sessions throughout the academic year. The Fellows are hired based on their first-year grades, and preference is given to former AEP students. They are expected to stay with the program for an entire academic year. These Fellows are charged with coaching participating 1Ls on study, exam, outlining, issue-spotting, and analytical skills using material that directly parallels the cases and materials currently being taught in the students' respective courses. The technique of paralleling skill-building lessons with active course material is shown to have a strong impact on student comprehension and improvement.

Fellows participate in a growing training program that provides a foundation in coaching, curriculum preparation, reflection, adult learning theory, and a mechanism for accountability. Mandatory training takes four times throughout the academic year, with required peer reviews mid-semester and at least one status-check meeting with Assistant Dean JB Kim in the third week of the term. Collecting attendance and participating in the training and review process is a required responsibility of each Fellow. The attendance taken at each of the weekly sessions and student surveys provide hard data to track and assess the commitment and level of involvement of individual students within the program.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Lewis & Clark Law School acknowledges that diversifying the legal profession is an important, incremental and long-term undertaking that is not limited to recruiting in the months or year leading up to application deadlines. One of the core purposes of the Academic Enhancement Program is centered around engaging the community in an effort to open the door to a more diverse law student population and legal profession.

AEP hosts two annual events as the central features of its outreach work to the diverse youth in the community.

**The High School/Middle School Mock Trial** takes place each February and serves up to 120 diverse students from the Portland and surrounding communities for an all-day mock-trial experience. The program is part of the LSAC DiscoverLaw Months. This includes a partnership with local TRiO programs and the support and participation of over 50 law students and local attorneys each year.

**The Summer Law Camp** is a week-long mock trial experience for inner-city middle school students hosted in cooperation with the Classroom Law Project .

## COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

The Academic Enhancement Program is a primary agent within Lewis & Clark Law School for expressing institutional support for an inclusive learning environment. The law school wants students and alums of all backgrounds, origins, and beliefs to feel valued and supported as whole people. This sense of inclusion is largely fostered by the long-term investment of both energy and resources in the success of diverse students.

Creating an inclusive environment is integral to fostering a healthy student body that functions at its greatest capacity and ability. AEP's effort to extend programs, opportunities, and services that support the sense of inclusion and respect for all students is an ongoing endeavor. These efforts involve not only students and staff within the program but also the support and investment of administrators and faculty across campus. AEP strives to recognize and engage the efforts of all campus stakeholders.



## Essential Values

### EVALUATION & GROWTH

The day-to-day work of the Academic Enhancement Program is dedicated to the support of the Law School's current students. A portion of staff time is dedicated to evaluating the program in order to improve services for future students. AEP is committed to assessing and meeting the needs of Lewis & Clark students and to contribute to a more diverse legal profession.

In the 2011/2012 Academic year, AEP launched a comprehensive outcome-tracking program. This data will enable staff, over time, to form a better picture of how the student body is engaging with AEP's efforts and how AEP curriculum might be adjusted to better serve them. Combined with the AEP staff's ongoing efforts to keep abreast of developments in the legal education field, AEP hopes to make and track positive changes in the years to come.

## STUDENT FOCUSED

Activity at institutions of higher learning includes non-curricular, non-student oriented efforts (such as committee work, scholarship, and academic conferences ) that are not always of direct benefit to students. However, the primary focus of AEP in all tasks—administration, research, event planning, or one-to-one student interaction—is to enrich and enhance the learning experience of law students. AEP recognizes that students come to law school with different learning and coping styles and capacities. AEP attempts to help students manage and excel in meeting the demands of the legal profession. Student-centered activities outside of the AEP core programs include one-on-one advising for students in crisis or on probation, advocacy for students with disabilities, career advising, and acting as a liaison to the Oregon State Bar Diversity Section, Oregon State Bar Diversity & Inclusion Program, Oregon Minority Lawyer Association, and similar organizations.



## LEARNING COMMUNITY

The benefits of learning in community, as opposed to solo-learning experiences, are well documented among higher education researchers. Benefits include higher student satisfaction, a greater breadth and depth in content comprehension, and higher long-term student retention. Lewis & Clark’s “pod-based” first-year experience is highly conducive to the formation of learning communities.

AEP strives to enhance the bonds of learning communities at Lewis & Clark by providing additional venues in the Summer Institute, TA Sessions, and Centering Sessions for community interaction, and development of interpersonal academic support. The social interaction fostered in the two-week Summer Institute and the small-group knowledge exploration in the bi-weekly TA sessions encourage students to work collaboratively. AEP also works to reinforce a meaningful sense of community through service and employment opportunities. The opportunities include volunteering at the High School Mock Trial, working as a Counselor at the Summer Law Camp, or instructing 1Ls as a Teaching Assistant.

## RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS

The Academic Enhancement Program partners with Admissions to recruit and admit diverse students. Assistant Dean JB Kim and devoted alumni recruit regionally and nationally.

Every year the Academic Enhancement Committee reviews student files with an eye to admit qualified students of diverse backgrounds and experiences, looking past the statistical indicators to the factors that indicate a student is likely to succeed.

## LOOKING FORWARD

The Academic Enhancement Program looked at four principle areas of improvement during the 2011/2012 academic year.

- **Data tracking and accountability**  
Comprehensively track data on all students that participate in the program for future comparisons. This will include reviews of all program elements and attendance at all events and sessions.
- **Maximize use of technology**  
Increase clear communication and the availability of resources to students and TAs, and increase visibility of the program offerings.
- **Expand AEP Fellows resources and training**  
Better prepare TAs from the start of the term to act as skilled facilitators. These measures will also ensure a consistent experience for all students.
- **Bar Pass Program**  
AEP will continue to offer and refine the Bar Pass Program and assess its effectiveness.

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