For more than 90 years, the St. Mary’s University School of Law has educated legal leaders with a commitment to service, justice and peace. As the only law school in San Antonio and the only Catholic law school in Texas, our students and alumni are serious about pursuing the mission of giving a voice to the voiceless through community service and pro bono work.

Graduates of St. Mary’s have become members of the U.S. Congress, governors and lieutenant governors nationwide, members of the federal judiciary, justices of the Texas Supreme Court and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, state legislators and leaders of some of the nation’s most prestigious law firms.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

St. Mary’s Law is home to many nationally known subject-area experts, scholars and practitioners. As the southernmost law school in Texas, St. Mary’s Law serves as a resource to the legal community of San Antonio and beyond.

In the past year, faculty have shared their expertise through:

63 works of scholarship  13 books  225+ media interviews

LEADERS IN THE LAW

Our faculty continue to lead at a national level.

Angela Walch, J.D.
Professor of Law

Testified before U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs on cryptocurrencies (2021)

Gerald S. Reamey, J.D., LL.M.
Professor of Law, Municipal Judge for the City of Shavano Park

Members Consultative Group for the American Law Institute’s Principles of the Law of Policing project (2016–present)

Afton Cavanaugh, J.D.
Assistant Dean for Law Success

Executive Committee Association of American Law Schools Section on Academic Support

Tuition about $11,000 less than average for private law schools
The one and only fully online J.D. program accredited by the ABA
More than 500 University alumni have served in elected or judicial positions

Only Catholic, Marianist law school in Texas
Top 4 Advocacy Program in nation, according to the ABA
Eighth-most racially and ethnically diverse law school in the nation, according to U.S. News & World Report
SCHOLARLY WORKS

Our faculty regularly explore current trends and issues through scholarship.

The Phantom Menace to Professional Identity Formation and Law Success: Imposter Syndrome
47 U. Dayton L. Rev. (2022 Forthcoming)

Machine Learning and the New Civil Procedure
73 SMU Law Review 493, 540 (2020)

Lech’s Mess with the Tenth Circuit: Why Governmental Entities are not Exempt from Paying Just Compensation When They Destroy Property Pursuant to their Police Powers
11 Wake Forest Journal of Law & Policy 297 (2021)

David Grenardo, J.D.
Professor of Law

Zoe E. Niesel, J.D.
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Emilio Longoria, J.D.
Assistant Professor of Law

LEADING THROUGH TRADITION AND INNOVATION

In Fall 2022, the St. Mary’s University School of Law will host the first 25-person cohort for its innovative, part-time online J.D., the first fully online J.D. accredited by the American Bar Association. The online J.D. will support the law school’s mission of increasing access to the legal profession for those who are typically underrepresented or who need to remain closer to home.

St. Mary’s has provided outstanding online legal education for more than five years through its graduate law programs, the Master of Jurisprudence and Master of Laws. Our renowned faculty — legal experts in specialties from business law to international law — receive extensive training in online education and pedagogy, and all professors are fully certified to teach online.

Visit law.stmarytx.edu/online-j-d-program for more information. For a behind-the-scenes look into what it took to launch the program, tune in to the EdUp Legal podcast episode at bit.ly/EdUpLegalEp5.

“The St. Mary’s School of Law trains ethical and creative problem solvers who become servant-leaders in their communities, informed by faith that the practice of law is their vocation. Legal education at St. Mary’s is enriched by impactful community service and inspired by characteristics that include justice, peace, adaptation and change. This is a close-knit community that embraces the values of inclusivity, equity, collaboration and service to others.”

— Dean Patricia E. Roberts, J.D.

Find out more at law.stmarytx.edu/faculty-scholarship.

School of Law Dean Patricia E. Roberts, J.D., hosts the EdUp Legal podcast, which explores the opinions of legal education leaders regarding the future of legal training, and considers the value proposition of law school. Listen to the podcast at anchor.fm/patricia-roberts2.
DATA-DRIVEN SUCCESS

The mission of the St. Mary’s University School of Law’s Law Success Program is to help prepare students for success in law school, on the bar exam and in practice. To accomplish this, the Law Success Program takes an innovative, data-driven approach to student growth by using assessments and data-gathering to plan legal skills development, bar exam initiatives and individual academic counseling.

The data also forms the foundation of a rigorous legal skills curriculum, including the first-year Legal Research and Writing Class, the second-year Fundamentals of Law and Analysis class, a third-year bar preparation for credit course, and the cocurricular Principles of Law and Analysis program, and involves significant writing development, practice readiness simulations and individual student skill building.

MENTOR PROGRAMS

St. Mary’s Law is a community of like-minded students, professors and alumni who are committed to serving not just the community, but each other. We know the law school transition can be hard for students, but especially for first-generation students.

In Summer 2021, we launched the First-Generation Law Student Pre-1L Boot Camp, a week-long program that prepares participants for the law school experience before law school begins through mock classes, case analysis and an introduction to the campus. Once the year begins, first-year J.D. students may sign up for a peer mentoring program with second- and third-year J.D. students.

Second- and third-year J.D. students have the option of participating in the Mentor Circles Program, which pairs up to eight students with two or more volunteer lawyers and judges. It’s a unique way for law students to interact with experienced attorneys who are willing to discuss the challenges of practicing law and balancing personal and professional lives.

ASSESSMENT

PRE-1L

Before students begin their studies, they complete an assessment that provides the following information:

- Academic background and expectations about study habits and time
- Attitudes toward learning and intelligence
- Assessments of skills and abilities relating to class discussion; rule application; case briefing; outlining; issue, rule, application and conclusion (IRAC) analysis; and essay writing

With this initial data, the Law Success Program instructors meet with students individually to discuss results and to direct students to appropriate skills remediation as needed. Instructors also use cohort-level data to adjust skills coverage in the mandatory first-year Legal Skills and Writing Class.

RISING-2L

Before a student’s second year, they complete an additional assessment that examines substantive law knowledge from first-year courses, as well as skills development. This assessment provides the following information:

- Substantive knowledge performance on each first-year subject as compared to bar readiness
- Multiple choice test-taking skills
- Ability to state a rule, apply law to facts and identify issues
- Knowledge and use of the components of IRAC

Each student receives their pre-second-year assessment report. Using cohort-level data, staff design bar workshops and substantive topic coverage in curricular and extracurricular programs.
At the heart of the St. Mary’s Law data programming is predictive modeling, which allows the law school to calculate factors that most contribute to bar pass rates at the individual and cohort levels. Through predictive modeling, Law Success Instructors share information with students, design bar exam interventions and ensure students have adequate and tailored coaching during their bar preparation.

The data includes the impact of multiple independent variables on bar passage. Variables include:

- Demographic information
- Entering credentials
- Law school courses
- Law school GPA at various points
- Commercial course completion
- Hours put into study time

Thanks to this data, St. Mary’s Law Success Instructors recommend data-driven best practices for each student and counsel them about what actions to take to pass the bar exam.

Raise the Bar participants have a 25% higher first-time pass rate on the bar exam compared to those who chose not to participate. Raise the Bar provides individual, data-driven, post-graduation bar preparation available to all St. Mary’s Law alumni.

One of the core principles of St. Mary’s University is to educate for adaptation and change. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the School of Law discovered new ways to continue excelling in advocacy and public service.

Under the direction of A.J. Bellido de Luna, the Advocacy Program led the way nationally for virtual advocacy competitions. These competitions, created with the help of partner schools, continue to ensure students at St. Mary’s and beyond have opportunities to practice important advocacy skills. These efforts led to:

- The largest invitational Trial Advocacy competition in the country
- Three competitions (All Star National Bracket Challenge, All Star National Challenge and National All Star Moot Court Challenge)
- Hosted 140 schools and 150 teams from 34 states and two U.S. territories

The Center for Legal and Social Justice continues to expand access to justice for residents of San Antonio and South Texas. While doing so, students earn academic credit in the Clinical and Externship Programs and fulfill the School of Law’s public service graduation requirement through Pro Bono Program opportunities. These efforts resulted in:

- The 2020 Texas Access to Justice Commission Law School Commitment to Service Award
- More than 11,900 service hours recorded in 2020-2021
- Creation of a Housing Hotline that aided nearly 500 people with advice and eviction proceedings

“A lot of schools loved the fact that St. Mary’s Law stepped up to host virtual advocacy competitions when other schools were stepping down, not because they wanted to, but because they didn’t have the support or the resources to move forward.”

— A.J. Bellido de Luna, J.D., Assistant Dean for Advocacy Programs and Hardy Service Professor of Law