

# Why Are Law Schools Important?



by  
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## About this series

The faculty of the new  
 Drexel University College of  
 Law is collaborating on a  
 series of brief informational  
 essays designed to spur  
 discussion about topics of  
 interest to the legal field.

Why are law schools important? As a law professor for more than 20 years, I am asked that question by neighbors, academics outside law schools and even members of the bar. My answer has always been that law schools are vital institutions that ought to be treasured.

The central mission of any law school is training the next generation of practicing attorneys. Lawyer jokes aside, this is an incredibly important task. Our society continues to place in the hands of lawyers our most important problems. With all of its imperfections, litigation remains a central method of resolving disputes around our core values. How do we enhance public safety while protecting individual liberties? How do we mediate the continuing tensions in our multicultural society around race, class and gender? How do we create incentives for business to produce with maximum efficiency while shielding consumers when business practices cause undue harm? Because crucial issues are litigated in American court rooms on a daily basis, we need excellent, broadly trained lawyers to advance not only their clients' interests but everyone's.

Lawyers do far more than litigate, however. Lawyers are crucial to the negotiation of every important business transaction. Law is the glue that holds complex transactions together. Moreover, lawyers serve in a broad range of leadership roles in business and the public sphere. Lawyers are richly represented in the senior ranks of corporate

America, in the non-profit sector and political positions. It is a fundamental mission of the modern law school to prepare its graduates for these leadership roles as well.

Law schools also provide great value to the community by providing direct legal services. Low- and moderate-income Americans still have difficulty obtaining access to legal services in significant areas including elder, family and housing law. Through clinical and pro bono programs, law schools devote considerable resources to fulfilling this unmet need. The opportunity to serve while in law school instills in our students the right values while providing a rich educational opportunity.

The third major goal of law schools is to produce through their research function fundamental insight into the role of law in society. Law faculties are privileged to examine critically every imaginable legal issue. They develop new legal techniques that allow the effective use of emerging technologies. They test the efficacy rules that courts use in litigation. They propose and critique legislative proposals. Law professors have been central to such recent debates as the methods of financing public education, the regulation of genetic engineering and the difficult issues surrounding national security law.

I am very excited by the missions of a modern law school. On a daily basis, I am able to collaborate with very talented students and faculty on teaching, service and research in areas of social importance.

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