Students of Color & Cultural Diversity
If you are considering law school, we encourage you to take a serious look at the University of Wisconsin Law School. We have graduated over 1,500 lawyers of color.

We are a nationally preeminent law school and part of a world-class public university. More than twenty percent of our students are students of color. We have a top-notch faculty, an award-winning facility, and an impressive curriculum. And like other first-tier law schools, we offer superb academic and career opportunities.

But we also are different from other schools in ways that may be significant for you. Let us tell you how:

- For us, diversity is not new.
- Our law-in-action approach will make your educational experience meaningful and exciting.
- Our commitment to students of color can be seen in our numbers.
- We’ve made a financial commitment to diversity.
- Our faculty and administration provide a supportive community for our students of color.
- Our LEO Program unites the interests of our students of color.
- We offer unique mentoring, support programs, and events to honor our students and alumni of color.
- Maintaining our leadership on matters of diversity is part of our vision for the future.
Diversity and equal access to legal education have a long tradition at the University of Wisconsin Law School. Our first African-American student was admitted in 1875; our first woman graduated in 1885. Our Legal Education Opportunities (LEO) Program has long been a national model for recruiting students from historically underrepresented communities and supporting them throughout their three years in law school.

For more than forty years, the Law School, through its Hastie Fellowship Program, has also been a leader in guiding and increasing opportunities for lawyers of color to become law professors. Graduates of the program have gone on to prominence as professors at law schools around the country, including our own.

We are proud of our tradition of diversity, but we’re not resting on our laurels. We know there is much more to be done, and we’re looking to the future by recruiting highly qualified candidates like you.
Top students are drawn to UW Law School because of its tradition of excellence and its law-in-action philosophy, which combine to make Wisconsin one of the most intellectually exciting law schools in the country. Our law-in-action tradition differentiates us from other law schools: UW Law School pioneered the belief that law must be studied as it relates to society, and not in isolation.

Our commitment to diversity aligns with this tradition because we believe that diversity improves legal education. It provides a broader, more stimulating and thought-provoking environment for everyone; enhances each student’s ability to see problems from multiple perspectives; teaches students how to represent clients whose experiences and backgrounds differ from their own; and prepares students to succeed in the increasingly diverse world in which they will practice.

The LEO Program makes UW Law School stand apart from other schools and played a vital role for me in selecting UW for my legal education. Having the opportunity to attend the LEO Banquet as an admitted student was an invaluable experience and solidified that UW was the right law school for me. The LEO community exudes a sense of family and togetherness that really makes the program an exceptional one to be a part of. Finally, the faculty’s participation in LEO is incredible and truly demonstrates that they are dedicated to diversity and inclusion not only within the law school, but in the community as well.

Lauren Powell, Class of 2013
Quarles & Brady, Wisconsin
BS University of Illinois
Hometown: Bloomington-Normal, Illinois
Our commitment to students of color can be seen in our numbers.

W Law School has made a significant contribution toward diversifying the legal profession nationally. The best evidence of our commitment to diversity comes from our hundreds of graduates of color and the large number of prominent LEO alumni who are active in their service to the Law School and our students.

Students of color make up more than twenty percent of our student body. As a national law school, we recruit students from across the country. Our current students represent thirty-four states. The faculty also reflect our commitment to diversity in race, sexual orientation, religion, and national origin. We have a national reputation for emphasizing diversity, and we are committed to maintaining it.

Like Wisconsin’s geographic position in the middle of the country, the student body at the Law School represents a diverse cross-section of the United States. Students of color come here from all over the nation and thrive because of the expansive opportunities, tight-knit community, and commitment to the success of the LEO program by the faculty, students, and alumni.

Matthew Jalandoni, Class of 2010
US Army JAG Corps, Afghanistan
BA Columbia University
Hometown: Anaheim, California
W Law School’s tuition is very reasonable compared to that of our peer law schools. The cost of living in Madison is quite affordable as well.

But we recognize that law school is a substantial investment for every one of our students. Accordingly, we have made a significant financial commitment to diversity. We recruit top students and try to minimize the financial burdens of legal education through scholarships. We assist students who show financial need, and we offer scholarships to attract students who bring academic and other strengths to the Law School. Last year, students of color received more than $1.5 million need-based and merit-based scholarships and tuition waivers. The LEO Enrichment Fund, an annual campaign among our alumni of color and other supporters of diversity, provides additional sources of financial support for students of color. This fund awarded more than $125,000 in scholarships last year alone.
Our faculty and administration provide a supportive community for our students of color.

Students from underrepresented groups have a supportive community at UW Law School. Specific minority student organizations actively provide personal, academic, and career support for their members. In addition, the LEO Program contributes to the spirit of collegiality that benefits the law school community as a whole.

UW Law School faculty and administration are actively involved with our students of color and dedicated to their success. Most importantly, our faculty is racially diverse. Many of our professors understand what it’s like to be a law student of color, and they, along with their colleagues, are there with support and encouragement.
UW Law School’s commitment to diversity has played a very prominent role in my law school experience. In the classroom, my classmates come from all walks of life, creating a vibrant and unique educational experience. Outside the classroom, LEO has provided me with invaluable leadership opportunities; and through UW Law School’s partnership with the Wisconsin Diversity Clerkship Program, I had the opportunity to spend the summer after my first year working at a first-rate national law firm practicing the skills I learned during the school year.

Amira ElShareif, Class of 2013
Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ceresi, Minnesota
BA University of Wisconsin–Madison
Hometown: Elmhurst, Illinois
The LEO Program, a student-run program, is designed to bring UW Law School’s students of color together as a single community. LEO provides a strong academic and social support network, promotes diversity, and helps recruit students from groups that have been historically disadvantaged. LEO serves as a communication mechanism, influences policy decisions important to students of color, and sponsors an orientation for first-year students. Each spring, LEO organizes an impressive banquet bringing together LEO alumni and celebrating the successes of our students of color. The LEO Banquet is a joyous highlight of the law school year.

In addition to the LEO Program, there are five specific constituent law student associations representing Asian Pacific-American and South Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latino, and Middle Eastern law students. These organizations provide academic, social, and cultural support for their own members and assist the Law School in recruiting and retaining students.

Our LEO Program unites the interests of our students of color.

— Michelle Yun, Class of 2012
Exelon Corporation, Illinois
BSE Princeton University
Hometown: Mequon, Wisconsin

At University of Wisconsin Law School, diversity isn’t about hitting some number or reaching a moral goal. People here are genuinely interested in building a community in which individuals of all opinions, backgrounds, and experiences can learn from one another. It begins with a careful admissions process and continues beyond the law school, as people recognize the elite status of University of Wisconsin Law School alumni. I’ve learned more about myself as a person and a future attorney from my classmates and professors than I have from any lecture I’ve ever attended or book I’ve ever read.
In addition to the services provided by UW Law School and the LEO Program, there are several unique programs available to serve students of color.

The Friends of LEO is a support organization of LEO alumni and friends that raises money, connects students of color with LEO alumni around the country, and provides a mentoring program for students of color who do not have lawyers in their immediate families. The mentors, who are highly accomplished lawyers and judges, make a three-year commitment to their students and meet with them regularly in both professional and social settings.

The Wisconsin Diversity Clerkship Program, a Wisconsin State Bar-sponsored program, offers an opportunity for first-year students of color to have summer employment in legal settings. The clerkship program places students in private firms, corporate legal departments, and government agencies. The experience, feedback, and real-world setting give students a way to explore their career choices and expand their options.

Partners for Success is a Graduate School program that supports incoming graduate students of color at the University of Wisconsin. Partners for Success provides professional, social, and educational networks by bringing together students of color from graduate programs throughout the entire university.

“...The Law School provides support and guidance to students of color in various capacities. As a law student, I was paired with a mentor who is a Madison-area attorney. My mentor served as someone who I can talk to about job searches, school, and my life in general. Within the Law School there are always students willing to help other students—from things as simple as finding an apartment to giving advice about a class or holding a study group. This multifaceted support system is unique to UW Law School.

Nadya Perez-Reyes, Class of 2010
State Public Defender’s Office, Wisconsin
BA University of Wisconsin–Madison
Hometown: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
We are serious about our commitment to diversity and have made it an important part of who we are and what we want to be. We will continue to ensure that it is a key component of our future as we assess our institutional needs and resources and update our strategic plan.

We are committed to continuing our tradition of recruiting talented students of color, helping them make law school a reality through financial aid and scholarships, and providing academic support to ensure their success. And we are committed to increasing our efforts at recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff.

"UW Law School’s commitment to diversity is very apparent. The tight-knit community, coupled with the various LEO organizations, provides an intellectually engaging atmosphere that I believe makes UW Law School unique. I have had the pleasure of interacting with intelligent people from across the nation, which has made my academic and social experience extremely enjoyable."

Richard Cesar, Class of 2014
US Department of Transportation, DC
BA University of Pennsylvania
Hometown: Savannah, Georgia
We are looking for students who will take advantage of the exciting opportunities we offer and who will give something back to their clients and to society when they graduate. We seek talented students who come from a variety of backgrounds so that they are prepared to understand and respond to the needs of clients everywhere—from Wall Street to rural Wisconsin.

Law is a profession. To be a professional is to serve others. This means we need all kinds of people with all kinds of skills who will pursue careers in urban and rural settings, in corporate and public service jobs, and in large and small firms. That is why our admissions staff spends so much time reading each file and trying to get to know every applicant.

We want students of honor, integrity and commitment. In turn we will make a commitment to prepare them to be outstanding lawyers.

If you are a student who fits this description, we want to hear from you.

The LEO Program played a crucial role in the difficult decision of which law school to attend. The student organizations are plentiful and active, and the projects that these organizations put together benefit students of all backgrounds. For example, The Coming Together Of Peoples Conference provides a rare opportunity for students to help shape the public scholarly discourse on important matters. Wisconsin’s commitment to diversity shows throughout the entire law school, and that can make a difficult decision easy.

Jason Sanders, Class of 2014
Arndt, Buswell & Thorn, Wisconsin
BA St. Norbert College
Hometown: Delavan, Wisconsin
The LEO diversity program has helped me grow academically and professionally. The diverse student body provides a fantastic learning environment where students benefit from each other’s perspectives and experiences. The LEO Program has also helped me prepare for my professional career. I was fortunate to be paired with a mentor through LEO and this relationship has given me valuable insight into the legal profession.

Kevin Du, Class of 2013
Axley Brynelson, Wisconsin
BS Harvard University
Hometown: Spruce Grove, Alberta
Meet some of our faculty of color.

Lisa Alexander  
Associate Professor of Law  
JD, Columbia University  
Contracts; Business Organizations; Community Development Law  

Originally from New York, Professor Alexander focuses her scholarly interests on the study of transactional legal strategies to foster equitable urban community development that minimizes displacement, mitigates poverty and promotes racial and social justice. Alexander is an associate editor of the Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law, a publication of the American Bar Association.

Sumudu Atapattu  
Associate Director, Global Legal Studies Center  
LLM, PhD University of Cambridge  
Environmental Law; International Law  

Sumudu Atapattu is the associate director of the Global Legal Studies Center, a joint initiative of the UW Law School and the Division of International Studies. She also coordinates UW-Madison’s Human Rights Program, the campus hub for teaching and research on human rights issues. Her own research focuses on access to resources by those forced to migrate as a result of climate change, with particular emphasis on women. She is the lead counsel for human rights at the Center for International Sustainable Development Law in Montreal, a research organization working to promote international sustainable development law. Her book, Emerging Principles of International Environmental Law, was published in 2006. She is currently involved in two upcoming book projects: International Environmental Law and the Global South (forthcoming in 2014) and Human Rights Approaches to Climate Change: Challenges for International Law (forthcoming in 2015).

Tonya Brito  
Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development and Burrus-Bascom Professor of Law  
JD, Harvard University  
Family Law; Civil Procedure; Children, Law, and Society  

A native New Yorker, Professor Brito teaches family law and several advanced courses she developed, including Children, Law & Society and Adoption Law & Policy. Her scholarly interests include open adoption, family law, children’s legal issues, and poverty law. She has written on the relationship between family law and welfare law, the promotion of marriage as anti-poverty policy, the image of mothers in poverty discourse, and how working mothers fare under spousal support law. Her current research into how legal assistance for poor civil litigants has been working in Wisconsin and Illinois received a National Science Foundation award. Before entering academia, Brito practiced law in Washington, DC, and served as a judicial law clerk for the US District Court for the District of Columbia.

Anuj C. Desai  
Professor of Law  
JD, University of California, Berkeley  
Master’s of International Affairs, Columbia University  
Copyright; Cyberlaw; Trademarks  

Professor Desai brings a diverse set of professional experiences to his teaching at the Law School, including having served as legal assistant to the American judges at the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal in The Hague, and working at the US State Department and in the Legal Resource Centre in Grahamstown, South Africa. His current research interests focus on the intersection between international law and communication and information technology. He has written on a variety of topics related to law in cyberspace, including Internet filters, copyright, privacy, the First Amendment, and domain name dispute resolutions. He currently serves as a part-time Commissioner of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission, an independent, quasi-judicial agency of the United States Department of Justice that adjudicates claims of US nationals against foreign governments.
Shubha Ghosh
George Bascom Professor in Business Law
JD, Stanford University
MA, PhD, University of Michigan
Intellectual Property; Law and Economics; Patent Law; Trademarks; Transactional Intellectual Property

Professor Ghosh, who was previously a professor of law at Southern Methodist University, earned a BA from Amherst College, a PhD in economics from the University of Michigan, and a JD with distinction from Stanford University. Ghosh’s teaching interests include intellectual property, business associations, Internet law, copyrights, patents, torts, and property. His published work has appeared in the Tulane Law Review, Case Western Law Review, Houston Law Review Florida Law Review, Harvard Journal of Law and Technology, Berkeley Technology Law Journal, Antitrust Law Journal, and other publications, both scholarly and practitioner oriented. His teaching focus is intellectual property and patent law. Ghosh’s book Identity and Invention (focusing on human genome patenting and personalized medicine) was published by Cambridge University Press in 2012.

Linda S. Greene
Evjue-Bascom Professor of Law
JD, University of California, Berkeley
Civil Procedure; Constitutional Law; Employment Discrimination; Legislation; Race-Conscious Remedies

A California native, Professor Greene is one of the nation’s most prominent African-American women in legal education. She began her career as a civil rights attorney at the NAACP and went on to serve as counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee, where she participated in the Senate’s consideration of five US Supreme Court nominees. She is former chair of the American Association of Law Schools Section on Minority Groups and former president of the Society of American Law Teachers. She has also served as associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at University of Wisconsin–Madison, and as vice chancellor for equity, inclusion and diversity at University of California, San Diego. She serves on numerous boards and foundations, including the US Olympic Committee. Greene co-founded the Black Women in Sports Foundation.

Alexandra Huneeus
Associate Professor of Law
JD, PhD, University of California, Berkeley
International Law; Legal Process; Latin American Legal Institutions

Professor Huneeus received her JD and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research interests include the judicialization of politics in Latin America, the interaction of international and national tribunals, democracy and judicial change, and judicial culture. Her dissertation focused on the Chilean courts’ treatment of Pinochet-era cases during the democratic era. As a practitioner, she has worked on a right-to-education case against the Dominican Republic before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and on the case against Pinochet in Spain and in Chile. She teaches courses on Latin American law and international law, as well as undergraduate courses on law and social science in the Legal Studies Program. Prior to becoming an academic, she worked as a journalist in Santiago, Chile, and San Francisco.

Thomas W. Mitchell
Professor of Law
JD, Howard University
LLM, University of Wisconsin
Real Estate; Remedies; Rural Land Tenure

A native of San Francisco, Professor Mitchell won a substantial Ford Foundation grant to document the ways in which state property laws have served to dismantle the land holdings of rural black farmers. Working with the Uniform Law Commission, he served as primary drafter of the Partition of Heirs Property Act, which has been enacted by several states. He has testified before the US House of Representatives on matters pertaining to black land loss in the rural South and supervised students working on behalf of communities that need legal assistance to retain their property and natural resources. Professor Mitchell’s land tenure interests have also taken him to Zimbabwe and South Africa. He has published articles in academic journals on land tenure in rural America.
Richard Monette
Professor of Law
JD, University of Oregon
MA, University of North Dakota
Indian Law; Property; Torts
Professor Monette specializes in drafting provisions for constitutions and codes for Indian tribes. He assisted the Havasupai tribe in drafting seven substantive amendments to its constitution. He also worked with the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes of Oklahoma to draft an entirely new constitution, which was approved in April 2006 in an election conducted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He has had many years of experience assisting tribes with constitutional reform projects, including drafting a new constitution in 1992–93 for the Ho-Chunk tribe.

Pilar N. Ossorio
Professor of Law and Bioethics
PhD, Stanford University
JD, University of California, Berkeley
Biotechnology Law; Patent Law
Professor Ossorio teaches at the Law School and at the School of Medicine and Public Health, and is program faculty in the Graduate Program in Population Health. Prior to joining UW, she was director of the genetics section at the Institute for Ethics at the American Medical Association. Ossorio has had an extensive career in the sciences. She completed a post-doctoral fellowship in cell biology at Yale University School of Medicine and worked as a consultant for the National Human Genome Research Institute’s Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications Research Program. She is the first scholar-in-residence of the bioethics program at the Morgridge Institute for Research. She joined the Law School faculty after a two-year research fellowship at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University. Her book, Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia: Parsi Legal Culture, 1772–1947, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2014.

Asifa Quraishi-Landes
Associate Professor of Law
StJD, Harvard University
LLM, Columbia University
JD, University of California, Davis
Comparative Law; Constitutional Law
Professor Quraishi-Landes is a specialist in Islamic law and legal theory. Her expertise ranges from US law on federal court practice to constitutional legal theory, with a comparative focus in Islamic law. Her professional experience includes serving as a judicial law clerk with Judge Edward Dean Price on the US District Court for the Eastern District of California and as the death penalty law clerk for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Professor Quraishi made news in 2001 when she drafted a clemency appeal brief in the case of Bariya Ibrahim Magazu, who was sentenced to flogging for fornication in Zamfara, Nigeria. Professor Quraishi is a founding member of the National Association of Muslim Lawyers and the California group American Muslims Intent on Learning and Activism. She is an associate of the Muslim Women’s League, and has served as past president and board member of Karamah: Muslim Women for Human Rights.

Mitra Sharafi
Associate Professor of Law and History
PhD, Princeton University
BCL, Oxford University
Contracts
Professor Sharafi is a legal historian whose work focuses on colonial India. Sharafi’s research interests include the history of marriage and divorce, legal pluralism, and the history of the legal profession. She holds degrees in history from McGill University in Montreal, and in legal studies from Cambridge and Oxford Universities in the United Kingdom. She earned her doctorate in history from Princeton University, where she studied the ways in which the ethnic identity of South Asia’s Parsi community was forged through litigation in the British colonial courts. She joined the Law School faculty after a two-year research fellowship at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University. Her book, Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia: Parsi Legal Culture, 1772–1947, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2014.

Meet some of our faculty of color.
Stephanie Tai
Associate Professor of Law
PhD, Tufts University
JD, Georgetown University
Administrative Law; Environmental Law; Comparative Asian Environmental Law

Raised in the South by two chemists, Professor Tai entered the legal profession to learn how to improve the use of science in environmental protection. She has written on the consideration of scientific studies and environmental justice concerns by administrative agencies, and is currently studying the impact of judicial discourse in cases involving medical or scientific uncertainty. Her teaching interests include environmental justice, risk regulation, and comparative Asian environmental law.

She began her legal career as an appellate attorney in the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the US Department of Justice. Prior to that, she served as a judicial law clerk on the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. In 2013, she was named a Supreme Court Fellow, giving her the opportunity to engage in a year of hands-on work for the Research Division of the Federal Judicial Center in Washington, DC.
Prospective students of color are concerned with the value of their degrees upon graduation and practice areas available to them. As a top national law school, we see our students employed from coast to coast during the summer. A sampling of where our students of color have spent their summers includes:

- American Civil Liberties Union, Wisconsin
- Attorney General’s Office, Arizona
- Barna Guzy & Steffen, Minnesota
- City of Madison Attorney’s Office, Wisconsin
- Ernst & Young, Illinois
- Foley & Lardner, Wisconsin
- Gray Plant Mooty, Minnesota
- Hawks Quindel, Wisconsin
- Hilton Hotels Corporation, DC
- Indian Law Resource Center, Montana and DC
- John Deere Corporation, Illinois
- LatinoJustice PRLDEF, New York
- Legal Assistance Foundation, Illinois
- Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Minnesota
- Murphy Desmond, Wisconsin
- Office of the Federal Public Defender, California
- Quarles & Brady, Wisconsin
- Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi, Minnesota
- Roerig Oliveira & Fisher, Texas
- Ronin Studios and Consulting, Wisconsin
- Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Wisconsin
- US Food and Drug Administration, DC
- Wisconsin Department of Justice, Wisconsin
- Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office, Wisconsin

Our alumni of color are found in almost every state and in every practice setting, including government, academia, corporations, private practice, and the public interest arena. We are happy to connect you to alumni in any area of the country or in any practice setting that may interest you. Just ask.
Where do our students work during the summer?
Faculty and alumni join current and admitted students at the LEO Banquet. The banquet is an annual celebration—and reaffirmation—of UW Law’s commitment to maintaining one of the most interesting, diverse, and dynamic learning environments in the country.
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