



Pre-Law Advising at Western Carolina University



As part of our continuing mission to educate students and prepare them for future careers, the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs is committed to preparing students interested in attending law school. A career as an attorney can be an exciting and rewarding experience, and that career can begin through a successful undergraduate experience here at Western Carolina. The Department has established a curriculum that enables its majors to take full advantage of the resources within the Political Science Department and at WCU to achieve their goals of attending law school. Majors from our Department have left WCU to become judges and attorneys throughout the United States. Recent graduates that have been accepted to prominent and prestigious law schools, such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, Arkansas, and Miami University.

Our curriculum includes classes specifically devoted to the study of law. These and other classes offered by the Department allow our students to develop many of the same skills needed by law students, including critical thinking skills, communication skills, research experience, and the ability to digest new information and apply that knowledge to new situations. Aside from the individual classes, the Political Science Department provides a pre-law advisor to assist students with their plan of study and their law school options. Research and creative activities, such as Western Carolina University's pre-law societies and the Student Association of Government and Legal Affairs, encourage students to develop their knowledge and skills outside the classroom. These opportunities also provide the chance for faculty members and students to interact and engage in the exploration and development of our legal understanding. The Department is also a key sponsor in University-wide activities, such as our Constitution Week and programs through the Public Policy Institute, which help to foster a better understanding of the legal foundations of our government. These activities, as well as the diverse listing of speakers and programs at WCU, offer a well-rounded educational experience that will assist our majors in not only being accepted into but also being successful while enrolled in law school. We invite you to visit the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs' web page (<http://www.wcu.edu/as/politicalscience/index.html>) for more information.

According to the Official Guide to U.S. Law Schools, among the specific criteria law schools consider in their admissions process include (among others):

- Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores
- Undergraduate grade-point averages

- Undergraduate course of study – especially its difficulty and depth
- Grade improvement over one's undergraduate career
- College activities, both curricular and extracurricular
- Letters of recommendation

The major in political science enables pre-law students to select a specialization in political science, public administration, international relations, and American political institutions. Attorneys often deal with laws passed by Congress, state legislatures, and local ordinances. They also interact with government agencies and employees. Therefore, the knowledge learned in the classes within the political science discipline, even if not specifically law-related, can become very relevant through an attorney's career. Aside from the knowledge gained, the skills required to be successful in Departmental offerings, included writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills, are the same skills needed to be successful in law school. Therefore, many students have found a political science degree from WCU to provide an excellent preparation for law school.

For more information about pre-law studies through the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs or admission to law school, please contact Dr. Todd Collins (J.D., Ph.D.), the Departments pre-law advisor (tcollins@email.wcu.edu).