

UH Law Center Marks 10 Years of Paving the Way for Aspiring Lawyers with its Pre-Law Pipeline Program

HOUSTON, August 27, 2025—The University of Houston Law Center is celebrating the 10-year anniversary of its Pre-Law Pipeline Programs. Since its inception in 2015, the initiative has supported more than 500 first-generation and low-income students by providing access to law school preparatory courses, LSAT study, and mentorship.

“When we first launched the Pre-Law Pipeline Program a decade ago, our goal was to level the playing field for students with limited access to legal education. Today, our graduates are thriving at law schools and legal careers across the country. That’s the power of access and the impact of investing in human potential,” said University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes.

Participants in the Pre-Law Pipeline Programs have seen improvements in their Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores, with a median score increase ranging from 6 to 14 points. Carissa Duran, a rising senior majoring in political science at UH, raised her score by 28 points while participating in the 10-week virtual program this year.

Scholars who have been accepted to law school have received more than \$11.6 million in scholarship funds. To date, the programs’ reach has extended to over 150 undergraduate institutions nationwide.

“Often, it takes belief from others before we can believe in ourselves,” said Mariesha Keys (J.D. ’19), Pre-Law Pipeline Programs director and a UHLC alumnus who was a member of the programs’ inaugural class. “Someone believed in me, and I believe in each student selected to participate in our program that they can be successful and achieve their professional and academic goals of entering the legal profession.”

Now, a decade later, the race-neutral, gender-neutral, and ethnicity-neutral UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Programs continue to provide effective resources, pathways, and opportunities for all students to actualize their dreams of attending law school and entering the legal profession, Keys said.

To make its pipeline programs accessible to more potential applicants, the UH Law Center publishes the Aspiring Lawyer magazine, offering guidance, advice and student stories to help demystify the law school application process and support future lawyers from all backgrounds. This is shared with college students around the nation.

This year’s theme for the Summer 2025 cohort, “Pressing On: The Journey to the Legal Profession,” reflected the determination required to begin a career in law.

“The journey to the legal profession is often long and filled with challenges — academic, financial, and personal — and this summer's students and all of our alumni continue forward, despite difficulties,” Keys said. “The passion to continue, to press on, beyond comfort and familiarity, applies to all who have participated in our programs.”

Thirty-eight students from 14 different colleges and universities participated in the UHLC programs this summer. This group included 12 Scholar I students (rising sophomores and juniors), 16 Scholar II students (rising seniors), one UH Cougar Law participant, and nine working professionals. The institutions represented ranged from the University of Houston and Texas State to the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York.

Over the years, the programs have evolved, incorporating virtual components like hybrid lunch-and-learn events, mentorships, internships, and mental health support. From 2015 to 2019, the programs were in-person, but following the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, they transitioned to a virtual format.

“Since the programs’ inception, we've customized our programs to include different tracks to meet students at various points in their academic and professional journeys—from college through working professionals,” Keys said.

The 2025 Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, in collaboration with several renowned law firms, hosted summer lunch and learn events featuring speakers who covered a broad range of topics. These events allowed participants to connect with law firm partners and associates, both virtually and in person. Hosts included Beck Redden LLP, Shook, Hardy & Bacon, Baker Hostetler, Jackson Walker LLP, and Bracewell LLP. The Scholar I students interned with a wide variety of legal employers such as Jackson Walker LLP, the Law Office of Ray Vazquez PLLC, attorney Eronn A. Putman, Porter Hedges, the University of Houston Law Center Immigration Clinic, and various New York courts.

“The UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Programs is incredibly grateful for the continued support and generosity of its various sponsors and donors who have helped fulfill its mission and goals over the years,” said Alumnae College Professor of Law and Assistant Dean for Opportunities, Pedagogy, and Community Engagement Meredith J. Duncan. “Without them, we could not have achieved our vision.”

To view the list of donors, supporters, institutional partners and collaborators from the past decade, visit [Support - UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Programs](#).

“It has been one of the joys of my professional career to oversee the UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Programs,” said Professor Duncan, who has overseen the Pipeline Programs since they began at the Law Center. “Our programs demystify law school and the legal profession. But they also teach them invaluable life skills they can apply to the rest of their

lives: with hard work, determination, and self-belief, the sky is the limit for them. They can change their lives, and I love being a small part of their journey.”

To learn more about UH Law Center’s Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, visit <https://www.law.uh.edu/pipeline/homepage.asp>.

##

University of Houston Law Center Media Contacts: Carrie Anna Criado, UH Law Center Assistant Dean of Communications and Marketing, 713-743-2184, cacriado@central.uh.edu or Rashda Khan, Communications Director, 325-656-2824, rkhan20@uh.edu.

About the University of Houston Law Center

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) (UHLC) is a dynamic, top-tier law school located in the nation’s 4th largest city. UHLC’s Health Law and Part-time programs rank in the U.S. News Top 10. It awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 12 centers and institutes that fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.

About the University of Houston

The [University of Houston](#) is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for excellence in undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the country, UH is a federally designated Hispanic- and Asian American-Serving institution with an enrollment of more than 47,000 students.