

A History of Teaching and Learning at Albany Law School

1700 to 1800s	Apprentice system: aspiring lawyers paid a fee to apprentice in a law office. System had varying results.
1851	School has three professors, all of them practicing lawyers. Albany Law founders argue for formal legal instruction. Classes held Monday to Friday. Written test at the end of each term. Sample course offerings included real estate, wills, personal rights, domestic relations, evidence, property, contract law, New York code.
1861	Students observed court proceedings and legislative sessions.

1870s	Case system introduced. Legal education begins to look a lot like current system. Faculty, all practicing lawyers, expands by several members.
1880	Two-year program instituted.
1903	Lecture series on legal ethics inaugurated. Only 20 of the 70 U.S. law schools taught professional ethics.
1905	A new focus on state law. Still only “adjunct” professors teaching at the school.
1910 to 1920	National trend swings back from theoretical to Albany Law’s nuts-and-bolts approach.

1911	Court of Appeals requires four years of legal study, three years for college graduates.
1924	Emphasis on practical training and professionalism continued, with a specialization on N.Y. state law.
1926	Debate team competes against other schools.
1943	Internships begin with the Albany Legal Aid Society.
1947	GI Bill swells student body; hire full-time non-practicing teachers.
1947 to 1948	New courses appear like administrative law, labor law, legal draftsmanship.
1950s	Students required to participate in moot court.
1952	Problem method adopted by several professors, emphasizing skill over content.
1953	Dean Clement writes an article arguing against clinical education, warning that the school would edge too close to vocational training.
1958	35% bar passage rate, due to large student body of war veterans ill-prepared.
1961	Student body shrinks, 85% pass the bar, second only to New York University. Professional ethics shifts from 25 hours to 12 for first-year students.

1971	Renewed focus on practical skills, bar passage, and a move to ground the theoretical. Attica riots plant seed for law school clinics at Albany.
1972	After Kent State event, 100 law students ride in patrol cars to observe police work firsthand, strengthening move to establish clinical program.
1975	Clinic established.
1981	Clinical education expanded to include the Litigation Clinic.
1983	Civil Rights & Disabilities Law Clinic begins.
1986	Emphasis on faculty scholarship: grants, student assistants, sabbaticals offered to faculty.
1989	Academic success program established.
1992	The HIV/AIDS Law Project begins.
1993	Post Conviction Remedies Project begins.
1994	Family Violence Litigation Clinic begins. Bar passage reaches 95%.
1996	Joint degree program begins with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, connecting law, science, technology. Skills Enhancement Series created. Areas are drafting, fact investigation, problem-solving/ADR, and persuasion.

1997	Creation of concentrations.
1998	Semester in Government for state and federal internships. Two new joint degrees: JD/Masters in Social Work and JD/Masters in Regional Planning.
2000	Semester in Practice created for second-year and third-year students to experience semester-long placement in judicial and public interest offices.
2001	Six new LLM programs added.
2003	Low Income Taxpayer Clinic begins.
2004	Health Law Clinic begins. Two joint degrees added: JD/ Masters in Public Policy and JD/ Masters in Bioethics.
2005	One course on substantial skills required. Excellence in Teaching Award established.
2006	Creation of Masters in Legal Studies with a Concentration in Technology Transfer.
2008	Curriculum revisions in response to Carnegie Report, resulting in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securities Arbitration Clinic begins. • First year curriculum revised; international administrative/regulatory law required. • One-credit one-week winter intersession courses blend doctrinal and skills instruction.
2009	CELT established.