

# ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM

The Hamline University School of Law Academic Success Program focuses its greatest efforts on the skill development of first-year students. We believe that helping first-year students develop critical skills in legal analysis will improve the students' level of academic achievement during their law school careers and ultimately help them succeed on the bar exam.

The Academic Success Program welcomes all students and serves students at all levels of ability. The Academic Success Program is not just for students who are struggling academically. We serve students at every stage of the continuum, from students on academic probation to students engaged in advanced scholarly writing. Our goal is to help all students improve their skills. Students do not need referrals to receive academic success services at Hamline. Any student who wants assistance will receive assistance.

We offer three primary services for first-year students: individual tutoring, structured study groups, and workshops. We also offer tutoring for upper-class students, and we offer bar tutoring, bar workshops, and additional bar preparation programming for both upper-class students and graduates. The following paragraphs briefly describe these services.

## Individual Tutoring

We have a strong focus on individual tutorial work in the Academic Success Program. Research demonstrates that individual instruction is the most critical component in helping students improve their skills, and individual tutoring sessions are the cornerstone of Hamline's Academic Success Program. In addition to discussing study strategies and core doctrinal materials with students, tutors can help students develop their skills in basic case reading, time management, legal analysis, synthesis, notetaking, outlining, legal writing, and exam preparation.

Most students choose to meet with their tutors on a weekly basis. Weekly individual tutoring affords a student the opportunity to create a program in consultation with his or her tutor based on the areas in which the student most wants (or needs) assistance. A student may also arrange to meet with a tutor on a periodic basis when he or she needs help instead of scheduling a weekly appointment. We offer tutoring during the weekdays, in the evenings, and on weekends. Last year, approximately eighty-five first-year students received tutoring services.

All Academic Success Program tutors are attorneys. Our team includes both full-time and part-time tutors, a number of whom are outstanding Hamline graduates who devote time to our program while engaging in the practice of law or in law teaching. Students appreciate the range of mentoring experiences provided by having full-time tutors, practicing attorneys, and law professors on our academic success team.

If you are interested in signing up for a tutor, contact Director of Academic Success Alice Silkey at [asilkey@hamline.edu](mailto:asilkey@hamline.edu). In your email, please include your name and contact information, and indicate whether you are a weekday or a weekend student. Please also indicate whether you prefer to meet with your tutor on a weekday, on a weeknight, or on the weekend. Please provide as many options as possible.

## Structured Study Groups

We provide structured study groups in the fall and spring semesters for all sections of Contracts, Civil Procedure, and Constitutional Law. In addition, we offer Criminal Law structured study groups in the fall semester. The structured study group program is based on the principles of collaborative learning, and it gives first-year students an opportunity to review course material, practice skills, and achieve mastery of skills under the tutelage and guidance of a structured study group leader.

Structured study groups are collaborative learning groups led by upper-class students who have excelled in law school. Study groups meet for one hour per week, during which time students work on developing the skills necessary to master the course material and excel on the final exam. In the study groups, students have an opportunity to review and discuss course materials,

ask questions about course reading and class discussions, work on hypotheticals, and take practice exams.

The goal of the study groups is to help students better understand the material they are studying in class by facilitating discussion of the material with classmates and an upper-class student who has successfully navigated the material and by teaching students the skills that will help them master the doctrinal course material. Structured study groups give students an opportunity to work in small groups on hypotheticals and sample exam questions and to receive feedback on their work. Thus, the groups are very helpful for learning study skills and exam-taking skills, and for obtaining perspective on the “big picture” of an area of the law and the context in which certain rules apply.

In addition to providing students with guidance on how to succeed in their doctrinal courses, structured study group leaders often serve as mentors to the students in their study groups. Upper-class mentors can help first-year students achieve academic success. Structured study groups often serve as a catalyst for students in forming their own study groups.

Participation in the study groups is voluntary, but all students are encouraged to avail themselves of this unique and helpful learning opportunity. You will receive additional information about structured study groups in your Contracts, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law, and Constitutional Law classes.

### **Workshops**

Faculty members present a series of workshops during the academic year that teach the skills first-year students need to succeed in law school. The workshops are open to all students. Workshop presentations, which are about eighty minutes in length, take place during hours when first-year students do not have class so most students can attend. Many of the workshops have an interactive component.

The Fall 2013 workshops will focus on demystifying the law school classroom; briefing, synthesis, and outlining for academic success; and preparing for and writing your first law school exams. The Spring 2014 workshops will focus on improving exam performance by reviewing common missteps on fall semester’s exam answers; and persuasion in briefing and oral argument. Each workshop will be presented on both a weekday and a weekend day. Please see the online ASP workshop schedule at [law.hamline.edu/asp/workshops.html](http://law.hamline.edu/asp/workshops.html) for further details.

### **Tutoring for Upper-Class Students**

We provide individual tutoring for upper-class students as well as for first-year students. Many students choose to work with the same Academic Success Program tutor throughout their law school careers.

### **Bar Tutoring**

We provide tutoring for the bar exam. We offer individual bar tutoring during the academic year, during January term, and during the summer. We also offer bar workshops and additional bar preparation programming. These services are available to current students and to graduates.

### **Academic Success Program Website**

The Academic Success Program website contains additional information about all of our services. In addition, the website contains information about academic skills (including “The Fundamentals of Legal Analysis,” “Study Tips,” and PowerPoints from past workshops) and life skills (including “Time Management” and “Stress Management”). To access the website, please go to the Hamline University School of Law home page and follow the links for Current Students.

### **Additional Information**

The Academic Success Program staff hopes you will have a successful and rewarding journey through law school. We hope your journey is filled with adventure; great challenges; and extraordinary academic, personal, and professional growth. Please contact Director of Academic Success Alice Silkey at any time if you have questions about the Academic Success Program. Professor Silkey’s telephone number is 651-523-3012, and her e-mail address is [asilkey@hamline.edu](mailto:asilkey@hamline.edu).