Building a Strong Foundation in Intellectual Property Law

Notre Dame Law School's Program of Study in IP and Technology Law prepares students for careers in IP Law with a broad range of courses and numerous hands-on opportunities to develop practical skills.

Core courses in Program of Study

- Patents
- Copyrights
- Trademarks and Unfair Competition

Students prepared for IP:

- nearly 1/3 of recent 3L students have taken at least two or more IP courses
- approximately 10% have undergraduate STEM degrees

Examples of advanced courses

- Trade Secrets
- Patent Litigation
- Trademark Prosecution
- Post-AIA PTO Proceedings
- Information Technology Law
- International & Comparative IP
- Entertainment Law
- Information Privacy Law
- Cyberlaw

Students gain practical skills to accelerate their entry into the IP field through the IP Clinic and with courses such as:

- Design Law, where they develop IP strategies for industrial design students' projects.
- Patent Drafting, where they draft patent applications and client communications.
- Licensing Transactions, where they draft and negotiate license agreements.

Beyond the classroom and beyond South Bend

- ND Law has a wide variety of externships for IP students locally, in Chicago, and in Washington, D.C., including current placements at global pharmaceutical and appliance companies, a major medical center in Chicago, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and the U.S. Copyright Office.
- Several students have taken advantage of international opportunities, including internships at IP law firms in London and Beijing.

Job placements for recent ND Law grads in IP field

- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
- IP-focused firms such as Venable, Knobbe Martens, Marshall Gerstein, Haug Partners and MBHB
- IP practice groups at global law firms such as Baker Botts, Jones Day, Kirkland & Ellis and Greenberg Traurig

"Notre Dame is a great place to study intellectual property and technology law because it is a place where we are entirely comfortable thinking about what kinds of innovation really promote human flourishing. My colleagues and I don't always agree about the best policies, but we share a sense that those policies are to be judged by their human impact, and that engagement across disciplines is critical to understanding the dimensions of problems and making progress on their solutions."

~ Professor Mark McKenna ~

ND Law's IP and Entrepreneurship Clinic

The IP and Entrepreneurship Clinic gives students real-world experience where they can apply their IP knowledge to assist entrepreneurs with such activities as:

- Prosecuting patents and trademarks
- Preparing patentability and trademark opinions
- Counseling clients

Second- and third-year law students work directly with clients under the close supervision of Clinic Director Jodi Clifford, a patent attorney who has substantial private practice experience. A few of the Clinic's recent successes include securing a patent for a biosensor device to detect serious diseases faster and more economically, and securing a trademark for a non-profit which provides financial assistance to individuals and families affected by epilepsy.

Partnering with the IDEA Center

The IDEA Center is Notre Dame's collaborative innovation hub dedicated to expanding the impact of University inventions. By participating in the IP Clinic and working with clients from the IDEA Center, students facilitate the transfer of faculty, staff, and student ideas from discovery to commercial application. Law students participate by:

- Engaging with IDEA Center clients through the IP Clinic.
- Joining interdisciplinary teams of students from engineering, science, business, and other fields in the McCloskey New Venture Competition, a nationally recognized business plan competition.
- Honing their patent searching skills by tutoring undergraduate and graduate students.
- Pursuing their own ventures, as one law student did by shepherding a startup diagnostic company through its initial funding round while two others pursued a venture to support pro bono legal services.

Student activities

Student organizations – such as the Intellectual Property Law Society and the Sports, Communications, and Entertainment Law Forum – host speakers and organize activities that enable students to explore the IP field.

The Law School and the Progam host multiple major IP conferences every year. For example, the Program recently hosted leading IP scholars for the 2019 Design Law Scholars Roundtable in Chicago.

IP Faculty

- Mark McKenna, Professor of Law and Notre Dame Presidential Fellow, is an expert in trademark law and has written broadly on nearly every area of intellectual property, including utility patent, design patent, copyright, and the right of publicity.
- Jodi Clifford, Director, IP and Entrepreneurship Clinic, was a patent attorney at Thompson Hine LLP prior to joining the Notre Dame faculty.
- Stephen Yelderman, Professor of Law, teaches Patent Law and researches the ways intellectual property rights protect, impair, and stimulate competition. He worked in the DOJ's Antitrust Division and prosecuted patents in Silicon Valley before joining the Notre Dame faculty and is currently clerking for Justice Gorsuch at the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Felicia Caponigri, Ph.D., Program Director, is an Art Law scholar and researches the ways in which cultural property law and intellectual property law intersect, with a particular focus on fashion design objects.

ND Law also has a knowledgeable and talented group of adjunct professors who supplement the curriculum with advanced courses and many years of practical experience .

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