

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

Examples of advanced courses

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

Students prepared for IP:

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

Students gain practical skills to accelerate their entry into the IP field 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 boutiques such as Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto, Knobbe Martens, Marshall Gerstein, and MBHB
- IP practice groups at global law firms such as Baker Botts, Jones Day, and Morrison Foerster

"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. One of the Clinic's recent successes was securing a patent for a biosensor device to detect serious diseases faster and more economically.

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 current law student is doing by shepherding a startup diagnostic company through its initial funding round and two others are pursuing 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 hosts multiple major IP conferences every year. For example, the Notre Dame Law Review hosted leading IP scholars for its 2016 symposium, "Negotiating Intellectual Property's Boundaries in an Evolving World."

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, Associate 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.

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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