

course is taught through the Socratic method. Professors engage the students in questions, rather than simply lecturing. UM requires an additional course entitled "Elements: The Theory and Craft of American Law," which is taught by Professor Stotzky. The Bulletin describes this course as one which "explores two overriding questions: the role the law plays in society and the way actors operating in the legal structure perceive their institutional function within the broader society." Professor Stotzky emphasizes the fact that students engage with texts that are not just case books. "They are able to gain skills through a more theoretical perspective," Stotzky said. Another innovative dimension to the first year curriculum is an intensive program in legal research and writing. In this class, students work in groups of four or five with an instructor to learn how "to perform effective research, state facts, formulate legal issues, and present reasoned soned nts integrating fact and law," according to the Bulletin. Students also focus on improving their writing skills, which is an invaluable skill for success in law school and in the legal profession. Hift described the Legal Research and Writing tutorial as "the most valuable class you can take."

In addition to these required courses, students may choose from a wide variety of electives as they progress through the semesters. First-year electives include Administrative Law, Analysis of Evidence, Environmental Law, Labor Law, Legal Accounting, Legislation and Substantive Criminal Law. Upper level electives include Family Law, Taxation, Patent Law, Race and Sexuality, Public Interest Law, Sports Law, Latin American Law and Legal Ethics among many others. Students also have the option to take a one semester course in Litigation Skills and then proceed to a Clinal Placement with one of approximately 25 legal agencies in Dade and Broward counties. The Clinical Placement also awards academic credit.

UM also offers several joint degree programs. Students have the option to receive a law degree with a master's degree in Business Administration, Public Policy Studies, Science and Natural Resources, Arts in Law, World Politics, Russian, East European Studies, Modern Middle East, North African Studies, or a PhD in Economics. These joint degree programs offer students the opportunity to complement their academic pursuits and broaden their professional abilities. The Law School also offers the degree of Master of Laws (LL.M.), which involves an extended program of individual research and specialization. LL.M. Programs in comparative law, inter-American law, international law, ocean and coastal law, real property development, estate planning, and taxation are available.

In addition to coursework, the Law School tries to instill a sense of responsibility and ethics into its students. During the first-years' Orientation, the Career Planning Office stages vignettes of difficult situations that often face lawyers. Students watch the scene and are then asked to think about how they would respond in a similar situation. "Lawyers and judges from the community come in to discuss how they would have handled the situation in the vignette. We try to carry the themes throughout the students' entire time at the Law School," said Goodnight.

UM also offers its students a wide variety of extracurricular opportunities. Scholarly publications include the University of Miami Law Review, Inter-American, Entertainment and Sports Law Reviews, Business Law Journal and the Yearbook of International Law. In addition, an official student newspaper, yearbook and weekly newsletter are produced. Student organizations reflect the diversity of the student body: American Bar Association/Law Student Division, Asian/Pacific American Law Students, Association of Caribbean Law Students, Association of Trial Lawyers

of America, Black Law Students Association, Cardozo Legal Society, Catholic Law Students Association, Equity Playhouse, Hispanic Law Student Association are only a sampling of the wide variety of organizations present on the UM campus.

Students do not spend all of their time studying, though. Despite the fact that UM has only begun to house first-year students on campus within the last year, students definitely make time to socialize. "Every other Thursday we have 'Kegs on the Slab,' which is an event that takes place in the campus quad. There's soda, beer, food. It's a real break," said Hift. "The Slab Mixers really make for a nice community," said Myron Mendelowitz, a second year student who graduated from Boston University. "Once I saw the kegs I knew that I could get through my first year in law school." Students also frequent Miami's bars, nearby beaches and the recently revived South Beach and Art Deco District. UM also plans to finish building of the George A. Smathers Wellness Center, "a state-of-the-art recreation and athletic facility," (Law School Bulletin) this fall. "It seems like it's in the style of the University of Florida - it's a really big facility," said Mendelowitz. Mendelowitz, who hails from New England, added that the southern climate is certainly a plus and may draw him to stay in Miami after graduation. "The lifestyle is nice. It's great to come home from class and have the sun out. I can ride my bike or play basketball anytime," said Mendelowitz.

On-campus housing consists of two apartment buildings containing furnished three-bedroom apartments. The buildings are "a short walk or shuttle bus ride from the Law School." The building facilities include local phone service, utilities and access to a 20-channel cable television system. The rooming fee is \$4,824. Many students live off campus, though. "There are millions of apartments nearby that are very convenient. I live in an apartment complex that's known as 'Melrose Place' because we're all students," said Hift.

The city of Miami's reputation for diversity is reflected in the types of students who enroll at the Law School. "The student body is one of the most diverse around. We are 30% minority: 12% Black, 13-14% Hispanic," Goodnight said. According to the Law School Bulletin, approximately 44% of the students are women and nearly 44% are from outside of Florida. Mendelowitz said that UM's ethnic diversity may have been a big change for students who attended more homogeneous colleges. Nevertheless, he feels a great sense of community on campus. "There's a pretty friendly atmosphere. It's the people who really help you get through law school," he said. The atmosphere is particularly important given the level of independence and responsibility with which graduate students often characterize as burdensome. "They don't hold your hand here. You have to be alert and self-directed to know what's going on," Mendelowitz said.

Another major concern for law students is the likelihood of finding a job after graduation. The Career Planning Center offers a variety of services to help students with this endeavor. In addition to offering individual counseling sessions, and resume and cover-letter information sessions, the Center provides an On-Campus Interviewing Program (OCI) and Firm Night. "The job market is really flooded. OCI allows big firms to come in and interview students as we're looking for jobs," said Hift. Firm Night "presents a unique opportunity for first-year students to meet attorneys at receptions hosted by major South Florida law firms." Hift said she is optimistic about the job prospects for UM graduates. "UM has a very good percentage of people who within a year are able to find jobs," she said. The typical starting salaries

for 1993 graduates ranged from \$18,000-76,000. This range represents the various fields graduates choose to pursue, from public interest to corporate litigation.

Many students worry about their financial situation during law school, as well. UM tuition for the 1995-96 academic year is \$19,540. Books and supplies are approximated to cost an additional \$1200. About 73% of UM students receive some sort of financial aid. The school offers a large number of scholarships and loans. Average awards total \$21,000, with the maximum at \$30,000. These figures include school loans and work contracts.

On the whole, students studying at UM are enjoying their experience. Hift and Mendelowitz found it difficult to delineate major grievances with their school, with worthy colleagues, comparatively manageable tuition, and great weather as its primary characteristics. "The school's only getting better," said Mendelowitz.

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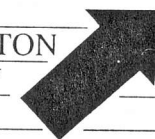
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