



Widener Law Law & Government Institute

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Cover photo: Harrisburg capitol dome



Law and Government Institute faculty and students produce the contemporary Pennsylvania legal issues show *In Session with the Widener Law & Government Institute* for the Pennsylvania Cable Network.

Study Government Law in the State Capital

Widener-Harrisburg's proximity to Pennsylvania's capital makes the campus a perfect location for the study of government law by providing significant resources to students and faculty. For example, because all agencies and branches of government are nearby, Law & Government Institute fellows have the opportunity to participate in many different government internships and clinics, and take courses taught by expert lawyers practicing government law.

Using these sources and a dedicated and talented faculty, the L&G Institute offers specialized certificate

programs designed to give JD candidates the opportunity to develop practice and writing skills through coursework and hands-on experience with government. The L&G Institute of Widener Law School-Harrisburg is a leader in teaching the professional skills that law students need in order to practice law.

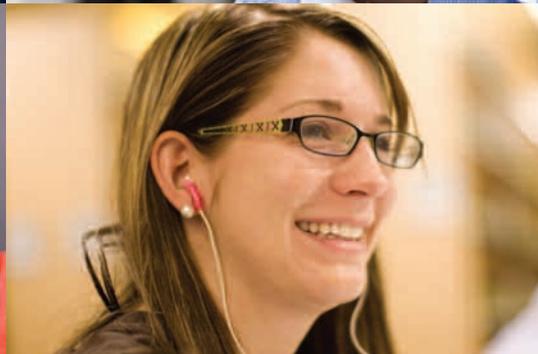
Focus areas include:

- Constitutional law, especially law based upon state constitutions, to ensure continued separation of powers, rule of law and preservation of citizen's rights.
- Administrative and regulatory law, to assure control of government agencies and regulators and fair treatment for citizens.

- Research, study and production of legislation and public policy, to ensure effective representative government.

The Law & Government Institute enables and empowers students and faculty to work with the legal profession, with each government branch, and with the independent agencies to improve the law. The Institute is a leader in adopting many of the improvements in teaching professional skills in legal education suggested in the Carnegie Commission Report, *Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Profession of Law*.





Why Law & Government?

Government law, a term referring to the “intersection” of law and government, is a substantial part of legal practice, especially at the state level. It includes the standards that define the structure of the branches of government, the operations of government, and the processes and procedural protections that the government must allow to citizens in civil and administrative actions and transactions.

There is an urgent need for lawyers who are skilled in government law in the private and government sectors. Widener Law-Harrisburg’s graduate employment rate is high because of our emphasis on that area.

Lawyers in the *private sector* are in demand to perform the following services:

- Defend clients whose professional, occupational or other license is being suspended or revoked. This new, rapidly growing legal specialty has emerged in the last 20 years.
- Litigate against the government in proceedings before administrative law judges and courts to obtain benefits such as workers’ compensation.
- Litigate court cases and appeals from agency decisions.
- Guide clients through complex transactions governed by government regulations.
- Negotiate with government agencies to enable complex transactions (such as environmental licenses) for clients.

- Participate in agency proceedings to draft new agency rules and regulations.
- Through litigation, force the government to act in ways consistent with the federal and state constitutions.

Lawyers who enter *government law practice* perform the following activities:

- Serve as administrative law judges.
- Prosecute or defend cases before administrative law judges and courts as a representative of the government.
- Negotiate on behalf of the government in license applications and other transactions.
- Draft legislation and regulations.
- Conduct agency proceedings to draft new agency rules and regulations.
- Serve as counsel to state or federal agencies.



“The opportunities and specialized classes offered through the L&G Institute give Widener students a unique advantage to develop the professional skills necessary to succeed in both a traditional and non-traditional legal career. The L&G Institute provided an opportunity for me to do an externship with the Pennsylvania Legislature. I am grateful to Widener for that opportunity, which led to a job with the Legislature when I graduated from law school”

—Tara L. Smith '05, Office of Chief Counsel
Democratic Caucus Pennsylvania House
of Representatives

The Certificate Program

Law students graduating from the Law & Government Institute can earn one of three L&G certificates:

The Government Law Certificate

focuses on the structure, operation of, and limitations on, the branches of government and agencies. L&G fellows working in this area have access to many diverse legal internship and externship opportunities with government branches and agencies. This general certificate creates opportunities to enter a wide variety of government and private legal jobs.

The Environmental Law Certificate

examines all aspects of environmental law. L&G fellows study and work on environmental proceedings before agencies and courts. Students learn how to defend environmental interests

through the legislative process or prosecute or defend those who commit environmental crimes. In addition to classroom instruction, students gain practical experience through various environmental agency or nonprofit association internships and the Environmental Law Clinic.

The Legislation Certificate

is a special legislative program allowing students to research and draft legislation. Students draft legislation that is actually submitted to the Pennsylvania Legislature and considered for enactment. Students also write articles published by the Pennsylvania Bar Institute as part of its continuing legal education for lawyers.



“Widener’s Law and Government Institute was a great addition to my legal education. The L&G classes expanded my knowledge of government functions and roles, and gave me the professional skills that enabled me to successfully enhance my employment and practice law.”

—Leo L. Dunn '07, Assistant Director
Office of Policy Legislative Affairs
and Communications
Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole

Why Law & Government Certification?

Law school graduates with the Widener-Harrisburg L&G certification have several definite advantages when they enter the legal profession:

- Most importantly, graduates have a command of a complex area of law and procedure for which there is high demand. They are better lawyers, for, unlike many other law school graduates, they have developed the expertise to practice in this area, which is different from other civil practice.
- There is great need for this type of expertise. The modern administrative state requires public and private attorneys skilled in government law.
- Many graduates who choose to work as government lawyers find that public service results in significant job

satisfaction. Government lawyers represent the public interest and society’s general welfare, a career choice that for many attorneys is personally fulfilling.

- When you enter the legal profession, you are prepared to “hit the ground running,” because you have the professional skills to actually practice government law as a result of your L&G certification training.
- Attorneys in private practice who represent clients in government civil matters also are in great demand. Most modern lawyers acknowledge that it is nearly impossible to avoid government law cases and issues in practicing law in the United States. The area is also growing at an exponential rate in the international arena.





Law & Government Institute Fast Facts

■ Choice of certification in three different curricular concentrations: General Government Law (Constitutional/Administrative Law), Environmental Law or Legislation.

■ Certificates available to day and evening students.

■ All L&G fellows participate in the Government Law Colloquium, fourteen weeks of one-hour lectures by government officials and attorneys.

■ Government Law Colloquium creates informational and networking opportunities for L&G fellows.

■ Priority registration for courses taught by our Jurist in Residence and Legislator in Residence.

■ Opportunity (Legislation Certificate Program) to draft actual legislation for the Pennsylvania House and Senate.

■ Opportunity to litigate cases before agency administrative law judges as an intern with the Governor's Office of General Counsel and several clinics.

■ Opportunity to publish in online journal, blog, and Pennsylvania Bar Institute publications.

■ Preferential admission to internship and clinics.

■ Increased job opportunities upon graduation.

■ Priority access to our Jurist in Residence (recently Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Thomas Saylor) and our Legislator in Residence for counseling and guidance on research, writing and drafting.





Widener University
School of Law

Law & Government
Institute

The Law & Government Institute appeals to law students with a passion for the complex interaction between government and the law. The school's location in the capital of Pennsylvania offers a stimulating environment in which to study and research how legal topics interact with governmental concerns.

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