A Texas Lawyer article mentions the UHLC rise in recent U.S. News rankings and quotes Dean Nimmer on admission standards for full and part-time students.

Texas Lawyer

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March 21, 2011

Volume 26; Issue 51

Rankings Released

The University of Texas School of Law tied for 14th position among 190 American Bar Association-accredited law schools nationwide and continues to hold its top position among Texas' nine ABA-accredited law schools, on U.S. News Media Group's 2012 Best Law Schools rankings. The Austin law school moved up one spot in the annual standings, released March 15, to tie with Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. Lawrence Sager, dean of the UT School of Law, says he does not run a law school for rankings, but he's pleased his law school moved up one spot to join the schools included in the top bracket.

"It's the right vector of change," Sager says. "The top 14 have this strange, mystical status." The top 14 slots on the rankings have been held by the same law schools, in different positions, for more than 20 years, and this is the first year that UT Law has been on the top 14 list, according to a story on the U.S. News website. Sager says his ambition for the law school is to be "comfortably in the top 10." He says the school has worked on helping its graduates get jobs, has hired excellent professors and provides a "rich program" for students. Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law in Dallas tied for 50th place on the list. SMU Dedman Dean John Attanasio says his school slipped two spots from last year because U.S. News changed the way it measures employment after graduation and now counts as unemployed those J.D. graduates who enroll in LL.M. programs or who report at graduation that they are not looking for a job. "Students understand that U.S. News does not measure placement or employment prospects well," Attanasio says. Baylor Law School in Waco and the University of Houston Law Center are among four law schools tied for the 56th spot, with Baylor Law moving up eight slots from last year and UH Law moving up four positions. Texas Tech University School of Law in Lubbock comes in at 117th place. Last year, U.S. News ranked only the top 100 schools and had listed Texas Tech as an unranked school in its third tier category. This year, U.S. News ranked the top 150 law schools, eliminating the third and fourth tier categories of previous years, and it did not publish the ranking of the other U.S. law schools, including four Texas law schools: South Texas College of Law in Houston; St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio; Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston; and Texas Wesleyan University School of Law in Fort Worth. Thurgood Marshall ranked second nationally in U.S. News' diversity index and has the highest diversity index ranking among Texas law schools, with African-Americans making up 45 percent of its student body. Dannye R. Holley, dean of
TSU Thurgood Marshall School of Law, says the school is meeting its mission of diversifying the law profession. He says another 20 percent to 25 percent of the student population is Hispanic, 25 percent is Caucasian, and the remainder is Asian or other ethnic group. "We have a really significant mix in terms of student body," he says. "We have that same kind of mix on our faculty." Five Texas law schools are listed among the 10 best for teaching certain specialties, based on nominations from legal educators, U.S. News reports. UH Law ranks sixth for health care and intellectual property. In the trial advocacy category, Baylor Law took third place, while South Texas placed seventh. UT Law ties with three other schools for 10th position for its tax program. UH Law came in eighth of the 80 part-time law school programs ranked by U.S. News. "We have the same exact admissions standards for full and part-time students," says UH Law Dean Raymond Nimmer. The part-time students take the same classes, taught by the same faculty, as the full-time program, he says. The school has offered a part-time program for more than 35 years.