

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **UH Law Center's award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Program celebrates five years of promoting diversity in legal education**

**June 12, 2019 (HOUSTON)** – Class is in session for the University of Houston Law Center's Pre-Law Pipeline Program, with 42 undergraduate students from across the nation currently receiving faculty instruction in typical first-year law courses.

The eight-week summer course is designed to increase diversity among law school applicants and to provide students from low-income, first generation, and underrepresented backgrounds an opportunity to seriously consider a legal education. The program divides students into two tracks — LSAC's DiscoverLaw.Org Prelaw Undergraduate Scholars (PLUS) Program and Scholar II.

The program, now in its fifth year, began with generous financial support from Paula Myrick Short, UH senior vice president for academic affairs and provost. It was established by Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes and Program Director Kristen Guiseppi. Professor Meredith J. Duncan, director of Metropolitan Programs and the George Butler Research Professor of Law, oversees the program.

"I applaud Dean Baynes' efforts to develop and execute this program at UH," Short said. "The demographics of our student population truly reflect the diversity of our city, and I am delighted to see that Dean Baynes has taken that approach towards changing the demographics of the legal profession."

"I am delighted to welcome the fifth year of pipeline students," Baynes added. "The program has produced 40 students who have been accepted to law schools throughout the nation. Students who participate in the program have seen their LSAT scores increase on average by up to 12 points. It is a program that has made a huge difference in the lives of students interested in going to law school. Many thanks to the Provost for early financial support of the program and Kristen Guiseppi and Meredith Duncan for their leadership in running the Program."

Students in the PLUS Program start with five weeks of classroom instruction including three weeks of first, second and third-year law school class instruction taught by Law Center faculty, legal writing and research training, and trial advocacy sessions. Each scholar then has a three-week internship with a variety of law firms and legal organizations in the area.

Scholar II students study a comprehensive LSAT-focused curriculum to develop a strong foundation of LSAT basics, and build upon it throughout the remainder of the program. They also participate in one-on-one personal statement, diversity statement and resume workshops.

"As we kick off our fifth year, we continue to celebrate our past and present scholars whose participation helped shape this award-winning program," Guiseppi said. "This year, we had our

largest applicant pool making the admission process exceedingly competitive. We are delighted to welcome our 2019 cohort of aspiring lawyers whose grit and resilience have made them such amazing and inspiring young leaders.

"Every year, our students demonstrate the ability to adapt to the program's rigorous, fast-paced curriculum and this year is no different. Our scholars are committed, invested, and eager to soak up all of the information and knowledge shared by our teaching faculty, mentors, law school students, practicing attorneys, and other members of the legal community. I am thankful for the continued support of our sponsors and legal community, and looking forward to another fantastic summer."

"We are thrilled to welcome these outstanding students to the fifth year of our Pre-Law Pipeline Program," Duncan said. "Helping these students change their lives is extraordinarily rewarding. It is a privilege to partner with such talented students as they embark upon this important journey in their lives."

Twenty-eight colleges are represented in the 2019 class. They include:

- Albright College
- Alcorn State University
- University of California Riverside
- Claflin University
- College of the Sequoias
- Dillard University
- Houston Baptist University
- Idaho State University
- Iowa State University
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Morehouse College
- North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
- Prairie View A&M University
- Rice University
- Saint Leo University
- Southwestern University
- Spelman University
- St. John's University
- St. Mary's University
- Temple University
- Texas A&M University
- Texas A&M International University
- Texas Christian University

- Tougaloo College
- University of Houston
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Texas at Arlington

In January, the Pre-Law Pipeline Program was honored by the American Bar Association's Council for Diversity in the Education Pipeline with the Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Award for Excellence in Pipeline Diversity.

For three consecutive years, the Law Center has received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from "INSIGHT Into Diversity" magazine. The publication cited the Pre-Law Pipeline Program as a key reason for the recognition.

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### **About the University of Houston**

The **University of Houston** is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for excellence in undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the country, UH is a federally designated Hispanic- and Asian-American-Serving institution with enrollment of more than 46,000 students.

### **About the University of Houston Law Center**

The **University of Houston Law Center** (UHLC) is a dynamic, top tier law school located in the nation's 4th largest city. UHLC's Health Law, Intellectual Property Law, and Part-time programs rank in the U.S. News Top 10. It awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 11 centers and institutes which fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.