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DEMOCRATIZING LEGAL EDUCATION

MARCH 2 - 4, 2026

Hosted by UC Law San Francisco

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W E L C O M E

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of UC Law San Francisco (formerly UC Hastings), it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 9th Annual National Legal Masters Conference. We are honored to host this 2026 gathering of administrators, faculty, and innovators who are shaping the present and future of legal masters education. Whether you are leading an established program or considering launching a new masters degree, your presence enriches this community and this conversation.

These annual conferences have become essential fora for sharing ideas and advancing a collective vision for legal masters programs. We are especially pleased to convene around this year's theme, Democratizing Legal Education. We fervently believe that legal masters programs play a critical role in expanding access to legal knowledge for professionals in myriad disciplines, ranging from healthcare to compliance to entrepreneurship and beyond. By broadening the pool of those who can engage meaningfully with the law, our masters programs improve decision-making, elevate discourse, and – I believe – strengthen the rule of law itself.

At UC Law SF, our own evolution reflects this commitment to innovation and access. Our legal masters program began small, conceived as a way for those in medical fields to understand the law and legal systems. Soon, though, in response to market demands, we extended first to a technology focus and then eventually settled on the broad degree we currently offer, with specializations as varied as immigration and criminal justice. Your own work developing and sustaining these legal masters programs similarly expands the reach of legal education, responding to real-world needs and enriching our society.

I encourage you to take full advantage of the rich agenda we have planned for you: engage candidly with one another, share lessons learned, build new collaborations, and imagine what legal education can become. Please also take time to enjoy our beautiful city by the bay and sample our many cultural offerings.

Thank you for your dedication to this work and for joining us. I wish you a productive and inspiring conference.

Warmly,

David L. Faigman, Chancellor & Dean

William B. Lockhart Professor of Law and the John F. Digardi Distinguished Professor of Law
University of California College of Law, San Francisco



March 2–4, 2026 | UC Law San Francisco | San Francisco, CA

Monday, March 2 – Kimpton Alton Hotel

(2700 Jones St., Fisherman’s Wharf Area)

Time	Event
All Day	Arrivals & Optional Excursions
6:30–8:30 PM	Welcome & Arrivals Reception (<i>hors d’oeuvres</i>)

Tuesday, March 3 – UC Law SF

(200 McAllister St., Civic Center Area)

Time	Event
8:15–8:55 AM	Registration & Breakfast (provided)
9:00–9:25 AM	Welcome Address
9:30–10:50 AM	Plenary: Deans’ Panel
11:15 AM–12:15 PM	Plenary Interview
12:20–1:25 PM	Lunch (provided)
1:30–2:50 PM	Breakout Round 1
3:15–4:30 PM	Breakout Round 2
4:30–5:30 PM	NLMA Launch Reception (<i>hors d’oeuvres</i>)
6:30–8:30 PM	Networking Dinner (provided)

Wednesday, March 4 – UC Law SF

(200 McAllister St., Civic Center Area)

Time	Event
9:00–9:25 AM	Breakfast (provided)
9:30–10:50 AM	Plenary: Alumni Panel
11:15 AM–12:30 PM	Breakout Round 3
12:35–1:45 PM	Lunch (provided)
1:50–3:10 PM	Breakout Round 4
3:15–4:45 PM	Closing Plenary & Reception (<i>hors d’oeuvres</i>)

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GETTING TO UC LAW SAN FRANCISCO



Hotel Shuttle

Transport from Kimpton Alton Fisherman's Wharf to UC Law San Francisco
Tuesday, March 3: Depart hotel 8:00 AM, arrive UC Law SF by 8:30 AM
Wednesday, March 4: Depart hotel 8:45 AM, arrive UC Law SF by 9:15 AM
Hotel guests have first priority for seats (space is limited)



Public Transportation

Take BART to Civic Center/UN Plaza station. Exit on Hyde Street and walk one block north/northwest to UC Law SF. The entrance to the 200 building where most events are taking place is on the corner of Hyde & McAllister (on the other side of Hyde Street from the BART station).



Parking

Available on-site at a range of \$32-35 per day. Please note that the UC Law SF parking garage does not directly connect to campus. Exit the garage and walk south down Larkin Street to McAllister, then turn left on McAllister and walk to the entrance at the other end of the block.

Address: 376 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102
Open 6 AM - 11 PM

WELCOME RECEPTION



Monday, March 2

6:30 - 8:30 PM

Abacá

Kimpton Alton Fisherman's Wharf

Join us for an evening of beer, wine, and MF Digital cocktails, as well as elevated "pica-pica" (small bites) in a beautiful, modern-tropical setting to connect with colleagues. Business casual attire.

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WiFi Connection

Network Name: UCLawSFGuest

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Connection through EduRoam also available

Key Information for Attendees

- Security: UC Law SF is an urban campus with strict security protocols for entry. Upon checking in at 200 McAllister Street, you will be provided with your conference lanyard and badge. Your badge will enable you to enter/re-enter campus buildings on March 3rd and 4th. Please wear your badge at all times while on campus. If you lose your badge, notify the security desk in the lobby at 200 McAllister Street immediately.
- Notice of Photography & Recording: UC Law SF may engage in photography, filming, videotaping, audio recording, or other methods of capturing your image, voice, or likeness in common areas, event spaces, classrooms, and other non-private spaces on campus. We plan to record and distribute video of all presentations and panel sessions to all conference participants. Our Lecture Capture Equipment records the audio and video of events that take place in classrooms and event spaces. **Please be aware that private conversations, even those at low volumes, and those that take place before and after scheduled activities, may be recorded and shared.**
- For Presenters: Tech Support: There will be A/V personnel available to help set up prior to each session. The IT and Educational Technology Helpdesk is located in room 377 of the 200 McAllister Street building.

Email: helpdesk@uclawsf.edu

TECH EMERGENCIES: 415-565-4625

- Lactation Room and Contemplative Space: We have a dedicated prayer/contemplative room in the 333 building, first floor, Room 105. There is a lactation room in the 333 building on the third floor, Room 310.

UC LAW SF EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of an emergency, always call 911.

If you need to file a police report in San Francisco, and are not involved in an emergency, you should call

San Francisco Police Department's non-emergency line at 415-553-0123.

BART Police Department

510-464-7000

For non-emergency you can text BART PD at 510-200-0992

UC Law SF Non-Emergency Contact Information

The Academe at 198 McAllister Security Desk **available 24/7 415-565-4800**

Cotchett Law Center at 333 Golden Gate Security Desk 415-565-4888

Mary Kay Kane Hall at 200 McAllister Security Desk 415-565-4611

Tuesday, March 3 - AM

Time	Event	Location
8:15 - 8:55	Breakfast (sponsored by Everspring)	Dining Commons
9:00 - 9:25	Welcome Address Chancellor & Dean David L. Faigman (UC Law SF)	Alumni Reception Center (ARC), 2 nd Floor
9:30 - 10:50	Plenary Session - Deans' Panel Dean Lonnie T. Brown Jr. (Tennessee - Knoxville) Dean David L. Faigman (UC Law SF) Dean Merritt E. McAlister (Florida) Dean Daniel B. Rodriguez (Northwestern) Dean Elizabeth Kronk Warner (Utah) Moderated by Catharine Restrepo (Penn)	ARC
10:50 - 11:10	Refreshment Break	Dining Commons
11:15 - 12:15	Plenary Session - "The Way Forward for Legal Education" David I.C. Thomson (Denver) Interviewer: Rebecca Purdom (New Hampshire) Professor Thomson will discuss his 2023 book, <i>The Way Forward for Legal Education</i> , published by Carolina Academic Press. Participants are encouraged to read the book ahead of time, as well as the review by long-time American Bar Foundation researcher Stephen Daniels published in the Journal of Legal Education. Audience members will be invited to submit questions to Professor Thomson during the session.	Room 122 200 McAllister, Ground Floor

Tuesday, March 3 - PM

Time	Event	Location
12:20 - 1:25	Lunch (sponsored by LSAC) AALS Section Update David Dye (Texas A&M) Tiffany Garner (Tennessee - Knoxville)	Dining Commons
1:30 - 2:50	Breakout Session 1	Multiple (see next page)
2:50 - 3:10	Break	Outside Session Rooms
3:15 - 4:30	Breakout Session 2	Multiple (see next page)
4:30 - 5:30	National Legal Masters Association Reception and Launch Party Brief Introduction by Tom Williams (Arizona State) Acknowledgment of Founding Board	Deb Colloquium Room and Skydeck

Introducing the National Legal Masters Association
(NLMA)

Advancing the role and recognition of legal masters programs and graduates

Legal masters degrees have been offered for over 70 years, but are not well understood. The NLMA launched to change that – and bring visibility to an important and growing professional degree.

Learn more at <https://www.nationallegalmastersassociation.org>



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Breakout Session 1

Tuesday, March 3, 1:30 - 2:50 PM

Track, Title, and Speaker(s)	Location Session Description
<p><u>Program Design</u> Branching Out: Concurrently Growing Your Masters Program Portfolio and Your Connection to Your School</p> <p>Daniel Guertin (Villanova)</p>	<p>333 Golden Gate - Room 201</p> <p>Structural and cultural divisions between JD and masters programs remain common at many law schools. This session examines how one law school's graduate programs office worked to bridge that gap by expanding and adapting its masters portfolio. Facilitated discussion will focus on strategies for integrating graduate programs more fully into the broader law school community.</p>
<p><u>Limited Licensure</u> Exploring the Challenges and Opportunities within Legal Practitioner License Programs to Invite Collaborative Discussion</p> <p>Sally Digges (Arizona) Sarah Hipolito (Arizona State) Emily Huntsman (Utah) Linus Kafka (Arizona) Annie Stone (Arizona State)</p>	<p>333 Golden Gate - Room 202</p> <p>This session examines Arizona's Legal Paraprofessional (LP) Licensure program and Utah's Licensed Paralegal Practitioner (LPP) program. We will review program history, program requirements, challenges, and opportunities for all three programs.</p>
<p><u>Marketing & Enrollment</u> Communicating the Value Proposition of Legal Masters Degrees</p> <p>Barbara Boehler (Fordham) Kait Johnstone Pawlicky (Penn) Adrian Phung (Penn)</p>	<p>200 McAllister - Room 122</p> <p>As legal masters programs expand, clearly communicating their value to non-lawyer professionals remains a challenge. This session explores how programs frame the degree's return on investment, employment mobility, and skills-based outcomes across fields such as healthcare, compliance, HR, technology, and government. Panelists will share practical messaging strategies to strengthen recruitment, clarify career pathways, and reinforce the admissions pipeline.</p>
<p><u>Curriculum Development</u> From Curriculum to Campus: A.I. Applications Across Legal Education</p> <p>Crystal Barnett (Regent) Andi Bevier (Arizona State) Mischa Wheat (Drexel)</p>	<p>200 McAllister - Room 123</p> <p>This panel explores practical strategies for using large language models to enhance academic administration and teaching. Panelists will discuss how AI tools can streamline program management, improve student communication, and support classroom instruction. Attendees will engage with practical applications and consider responsible implementation approaches that increase efficiency while maintaining meaningful learning experiences.</p>

Breakout Session 2

Tuesday, March 3, 3:15 - 4:30

Track, Title, and Speaker(s)	Location Session Description
<p><u>Marketing & Enrollment</u> Rebuilding the Legal Masters Foundation (Before Marketing Works)</p> <p>Paul Berman (George Washington) Mike Fogarty (MF Digital) Sophia George (George Washington) Jesse Homan (MF Digital)</p>	<p>333 Golden Gate - Room 201</p> <p>How does a law school create and market a high-prestige legal masters program? This session examines how one institution approached program design and marketing strategy and how it partnered with specialized digital marketing expertise to build a strong legal masters foundation. Learn how aligning admissions operations with targeted digital strategy can clarify positioning, strengthen institutional direction, and support scalable, sustainable growth.</p>
<p><u>Faculty and Teaching</u> Integrating Rigor, Pedagogy, and Career Readiness in Legal Masters Education</p> <p>Claudia Cantarella (UC Law SF) Jason Fiske (UCLA) Marye Phillips (Pitt) Moderator: Sandra Erickson (Arizona State)</p>	<p>333 Golden Gate - Room 202</p> <p>Legal masters programs must balance doctrinal rigor with practical learning that prepares legally adept professionals for complex regulatory environments. As these programs expand, institutions face a central design question: how can MLS curricula maintain academic rigor comparable to JD education while serving the distinct professional roles of non-lawyer students? This session explores how doctrinal depth, intentional curricular design, and career-oriented learning outcomes can be integrated to prepare graduates for legally consequential decision-making in regulated fields.</p>
<p><u>Program Design</u> The Benefits of Topic-Specific MLS Programs</p> <p>Theresa Beaulieu (Arizona State) Barbara Boehler (Fordham) Sarah Hooper (UC Law SF)</p>	<p>200 McAllister - Room 122</p> <p>This session highlights successful topic-specific legal masters programs and examines how defining focused areas of law cultivates deeper expertise, clearer professional identities, and stronger employer alignment. Panelists will explore how specialization supports experiential learning and industry partnerships while strengthening recruitment and alumni engagement. For administrators, a well-designed specialized program can differentiate the institution and respond strategically to emerging legal needs.</p>
<p><u>Program Assessment</u> Program Self Study: Why, When, How, and Lessons Learned</p> <p>Crystal Edwards (Maryland) Catharine Restrepo (Penn)</p>	<p>200 McAllister - Room 123</p> <p>This session examines the process of conducting self-assessments for legal masters programs from the perspectives of both organizers and reviewers. Through interactive discussion, attendees will explore best practices for planning and executing program reviews, incorporating stakeholder feedback, and responding to evolving student needs. Participants will leave with an adaptable framework for implementing their own program self-studies.</p>



TUESDAY DINNER

Join us for a "subpar" evening that is anything but! We rented out the entire Subpar Mini Golf venue in the heart of Ghirardelli Square for an exclusive night of play and networking. The indoor course features intricate models of San Francisco's most famous sights, offering a playful way to explore the city without leaving the building. Whether you're a seasoned pro or just here for the dinner and drinks, this event is designed for maximum fun and informal connection. Dinner, drinks, putters, and golf balls provided—just bring your competitive spirit!

- Attire: This venue is indoors, with an outdoor patio. A bus will leave directly from UC Law SF and drop off at Ghirardelli Square, so your conference attire is fine, but if you prefer to change, casual attire with layers is the way to go – San Francisco can get cold at night! Subpar Miniature Golf is an 8-minute walk from the Kimpton Alton Hotel (approximately 3.5 blocks).
- Menu: An eclectic mix of Asian-inspired dishes and heavy hors d'oeuvres including sushi, dim sum, Thai beef stir-fry, and teriyaki wings.

Special thanks to our Gold sponsor EducationDynamics for supporting this event!



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Wednesday, March 4

Time	Event	Location
9:00 - 9:25	Breakfast	Dining Commons
9:30 - 10:50	<p>Alumni Panel</p> <p>Participating Alumni:</p> <p>Rowena Brown (UC Law SF MLS) At-Large City Councilmember, City of Oakland, CA</p> <p>Lucy Dong (UC Law SF MLS) Director of Finance and Administration for the San Mateo County Flood & Sea Level Rise Resiliency District (OneShoreline)</p> <p>Patrick Ip (UCLA Law MLS) Co-Founder & CEO at Theo Ai</p> <p>Kevin Liebig (UC Law SF MLS) Regional Vice President of Human Resources for Highgate Hotels</p> <p>Sandra Plenski (USC Gould MLS) Deputy CFO and Controller, UC Law SF</p> <p>Moderated by Laila Louridas and Jessica Vapnek (UC Law SF)</p>	Alumni Reception Center (ARC), 2 nd Floor
10:50 - 11:10	Refreshment Break	Dining Commons
11:15 - 12:30	Breakout Session 3	Multiple (see next)
12:35 - 1:45	Lunch	Dining Commons
1:50 - 3:10	Breakout Session 4	Multiple (see next)
3:15 - 4:45	Closing Plenary, Discussion, & Reception (sponsored by AllCampus)	Deb Colloquium Room and Skydeck

Thank you for attending the conference. We hope to see you again next year!
Please reach out to info@legalmastersconference.org with any questions, ideas, or suggestions for next year's conference.

Breakout Session 3

Wednesday, March 4, 11:15 - 12:30

Track, Title, and Speaker(s)	Location Session Description
<p><u>Faculty and Teaching</u> DISCUSSION: Teaching in the Gray Zone</p> <p>Jennifer Ward (Arizona State)</p>	<p>333 Golden Gate - Room 201</p> <p>This is not the session for quietly working in the back row. Teaching in the Gray Zone is a facilitated, discussion-based session examining the lived experience of instruction in online and hybrid legal education. Participants will engage in structured conversation about ambiguity around academic integrity, AI use, accommodations, and faculty roles across varied institutional contexts. Attendees should expect active participation and reflective dialogue rather than a traditional lecture.</p>
<p><u>Marketing & Enrollment</u> From Invisible to Inevitable: How AI Search Unlocks Enrollment from Audiences You're Missing</p> <p>Amy King (William & Mary) Rhea Vitalis (Everspring)</p>	<p>198 McAllister - Room 106 (Specter Courtroom)</p> <p>The students who could fill your legal masters cohorts are out there—searching for career transitions and job pivots. Today, AI tools like ChatGPT and Google answer those questions without ever mentioning your program. The panelists will show you exactly how to change that: surfacing your program in AI-generated answers, reaching untapped audiences, and measuring what actually predicts enrollment. This session will provide you the tools to reshape how you recruit.</p>
<p><u>Student and Career Services</u> Beyond Advising: Creating Student Support for the Modern Learner</p> <p>Nicholas Kajimoto (USC) Kelli Rodriguez (Seattle) Annie Stone (Arizona State)</p>	<p>198 McAllister - Room 106 (Baxter Courtroom)</p> <p>This session examines how graduate legal programs can move beyond traditional advising to better support modern learners. Using common student-affairs scenarios—including international student issues, mental health, academic integrity, and professional development—the presenters will lead a discussion on practical strategies for helping legal masters students articulate their professional identity and feel holistically supported throughout their academic experience.</p>

Breakout Session 4

Wednesday, March 4, 1:50 - 3:10

Track, Title, and Speaker(s)	Description
<p><u>Marketing & Enrollment</u> AI-Driven Strategies to Meet the Modern Learner</p> <p>David Dye (Texas A&M) Bethany Moran (EducationDynamics)</p>	<p>333 Golden Gate - Room 201</p> <p>AI has reshaped how modern learners search, evaluate, and select legal masters programs. Zero-click behavior, conversational search, and rapid shifts in digital discovery now influence every point in the funnel. The panelists will break down how institutions can strengthen visibility and enrollment by embracing AI-driven search behavior rather than reacting to it.</p>
<p><u>Professional Development</u> The Power of Professional Partners: How Peer Collaboration Drives Growth, Confidence, and Better Results</p> <p>Tiffany Garner (Tennessee - Knoxville) Jennifer McIntyre (Florida)</p>	<p>333 Golden Gate - Room 202</p> <p>Professional growth can be isolating, even in collaborative environments. This session introduces the concept of “Professional Partners”—two professionals in similar roles who intentionally connect to brainstorm, problem-solve, and provide mutual support. Presenters will share how this model helped them navigate challenges and build confidence, and attendees will leave with practical guidance for identifying a partner and structuring effective check-ins.</p>
<p><u>Faculty and Teaching</u> WORKSHOP: From Estimates to Evidence - Practical Tools for Calculating Student and Faculty Workload</p> <p>Sam Farkas (UC Law SF) Rebecca Purdom (New Hampshire)</p>	<p>200 McAllister - Room 122</p> <p>This hands-on workshop provides practical tools for calculating time-on-task for both students and faculty/graders. Participants will examine course materials, assignments, and assessments to evaluate workload using established models and grading calculators. The session will also explore how workload analysis informs faculty planning, course review, accommodations management, and accreditation documentation. Attendees will leave with concrete strategies for integrating workload analysis into program design and oversight.</p>

Acknowledgements

This conference wouldn't be possible without the work of our dedicated volunteer committee.

Catherine Barnard
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This conference is made possible through the generous support of our sponsors. Please take time during breaks and meals to visit their exhibitor tables in the Dining Commons, thank them for their support, and learn how their services can strengthen your Legal Masters program.

Exhibit Hall Hours:

Tuesday - 8:15 AM - 5:00 PM
Wednesday - 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

...and a huge THANK YOU to our hosts at UC Law San Francisco. We appreciate your hospitality!

UC SAN FRANCISCO Law

Katey Mason
Morgan Wells
Jessica Vapnek
And the entire team!

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