

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW ACADEMIC FELLOW PROGRAM

What is an Academic Fellow?

Academic Fellows are upper-level (second and third-year) students with strong academic records and grades of 3.5 or above in each class for which they serve as an Academic Fellow. Academic Fellows are assigned to doctrinal courses taught during the first year of law study, as well as the Constitutional Law, Federal Income Tax, Evidence, and Corporations classes.

How are Academic Fellows selected?

Academic Fellows are selected by the Director of Academic Achievement after consultation with the professors who teach the courses. Selection is based on a number of criteria including a student's cumulative grade point average, the grade the student received in the course for which they seek to be an Academic Fellow, what professor the student had for the course for which they seek to be an Academic Fellow, the student's class and work schedule, the student's communication skills, and the student's desire to help other students.

Why you should be an Academic Fellow

Serving as an Academic Fellow will allow you to work closely with a doctrinal professor. In addition, it will allow you to review the material in a course that will be tested on the bar examination. Also, serving as an Academic Fellow may enhance your resume and distinguish you from other job applicants. Finally, as an Academic Fellow, you can give something back to the law school by helping others succeed.

Expectations for Academic Fellows

Academic Fellows hold office hours for one hour each week during which time they are available to all students in the course. Generally, this time will be used to respond to student questions. Individual professors, however, may expand or limit the tasks that may be undertaken during office hours by the Academic Fellows for their courses. Academic Fellows also meet with a small study group for one hour each week. Unlike the office hours, the small study groups are only available to certain students identified by the professor or the Director of Academic Achievement. If, based on your interactions with them during office hours, you think a specific student would benefit from participation in the small study group but is not currently participating, please notify the Director of Academic Achievement or the course professor.

An Academic Fellow must meet with the professor for the course for which they serve as an Academic Fellow prior to their first meeting with students and must thereafter meet

regularly with the professor throughout the semester. The Academic Fellow should obtain a copy of the course syllabus and discuss with the professor any expectations and/or limitations the professor has with regard to the role of the Academic Fellow. The Academic Fellow should also ascertain what book the professor is using for the course. Don't assume that, just because you previously took the same course from this professor, the book has not changed. Any materials prepared by an Academic Fellow for use during office hours or with a small study group must first be approved by the professor.

Each Academic Fellow must meet in person with the Director of Academic Achievement prior to the first meeting with their small study group. Also, the Academic Fellows will meet as a group with the Director of Academic Achievement approximately one time per month. The Academic Fellows will be paid their customary hourly rate for these meetings.

You are not expected to be as well versed in the subject matter as the professor. It is acceptable to admit to students that you do not know something related to the course for which you are an Academic Fellow. Before answering student questions regarding the substantive law, think about the consequences if you provide a student with incorrect information. This could adversely affect the student's grade. So if a student asks a question about the substantive law and you are not confident about the response, refer the student to the professor or tell the student that you will find out from the professor and follow up with them at your next meeting.

Academic Fellows may not review legal writing assignments. If you receive such a request, inform the student of this policy and refer the student to their legal writing professor, their Dean's Fellow or the Director for Academic Achievement.

Goals of the small study groups

The primary goal of the small study groups is to teach study skills and exam taking skills, not to teach the substantive law. Your job is to assist students in improving how to learn the law and how to apply the law on exams. Whenever possible, the students in the group should actively participate in the sessions. The greater the students are involved, the more they will learn. If the students are unable to answer a question or ask you questions about the material, suggest ways they can go about finding the answer instead of simply providing the answer to them. Think about the process you would go through to find the answer. For example, you might suggest that they review their class notes and reading notes, skim the cases in their textbook related to the subject, or consult a hornbook. Then give the students a few minutes as a group to go through this process and find the answer themselves.

Small study group ideas

You should have a plan for every study group session. You cannot simply "wing it." In the beginning of the semester, focus on skills that relate to learning the law. As the

semester progresses, the focus of the group should shift to preparing for finals. When planning for a study group session, remember that your role is to model good student learning. You should review the relevant substantive law in advance of each session but also should think about how you learned the law in the first instance. What worked for you? What other approaches might work for the students in your group? Also remember that the study group session is only one hour long. Be realistic about what can be accomplished during this limited amount of time. You will not be able to cover all of the topics the students covered in class that week so choose topics that seem to present the greatest difficulty and/or are the most likely to be tested on the exam to use as the basis for the skills you want the students to learn.

Possible activities include the following:

Have the students brief the cases they are supposed to read for the following week and bring their briefs to the study group session. As a group, discuss the cases. What were the relevant facts? What was the holding? What was the rationale? Were there any policy considerations underlying the court's decision? Is there any indication in the case that the court would have ruled differently if some of the facts were different? Also discuss what the students put in their briefs. Have they included a lot of legally insignificant facts? Did they go into greater detail than necessary? The goal should be for students to brief their cases in an effective and efficient manner.

Discuss as a group the rules of law that were covered in class that week, including the elements of the rule, exceptions, defenses, policy, and any minority rule. You should merely ask questions and have the students talk through the answers as a group.

Discuss new terms/rules that were covered in class that week and how they can prepare flash cards for these terms/rules. In the alternative, practice writing certain rules, asking the students to write the rules as they would on the final exam. Then discuss as a group how the students drafted the rules. The goal should be for the students to concisely and accurately state the rules of law.

Use hypotheticals to discuss as a group how the rules they are learning might relate to different situations.

Have the students answer some multiple choice questions related to the material they currently are covering in class. Then discuss the possible answers, what the best answer is, and why.

Approximately once each month, notify the students that they are to bring to the next study group session their course outlines for specific topics that you identify. At the next session, discuss for each topic what the students included in their outlines. If students are over-inclusive in their outlines, discuss as a group what could be omitted. If students are under-inclusive, discuss as a group what should be added. You may show *portions* of your own outline for the course to the students in your group. Do not, however, give them your entire outline. Bear in mind that the students need to learn for themselves how

to process what they are reading and discussing in class. For this reason, you also should encourage students to use study aids wisely. Canned briefs and commercial outlines do not foster active learning or the development of skills needed to conduct legal analysis. They can be helpful, however, in seeing the big picture or checking to see if the student's own formulation of a rule is accurate.

Another possible approach to outlining is for you to prepare a sample outline for a specific topic, but leave several portions of the outline blank. For example, leave blanks for some of the elements, one or more defenses, and the policy underlying the rule. Have each student attempt to fill in the outline on their own and thereafter discuss as a group how the blank portions of the outline should be completed.

As a group, make flow charts for major topics covered in the course.

Mid-semester, make an issue checklist that the students will memorize to help them spot issues during the exam. Periodically discuss what should be added to the checklist as new material is covered.

Review a hypothetical and use the issue checklist to practice issue spotting.

Using a hypothetical, identify one important issue raised by the question. Discuss as a group the applicable law and talk through an IRAC-type answer on that issue. Then have the students write the answer to that issue. Review to make sure they used the IRAC formula correctly.

Review multi-issue hypotheticals and practice outlining the answer. Many students do not outline their exam answers. Instead, they immediately begin writing. This causes them to miss issues, fail to answer all aspects of the question and/or omit critical portions of their answer. Have each student spend 15 to 20 minutes outlining the answer and then discuss as a group to determine whether the students followed the instructions, outlined their answers based on the call of the questions, included all of the issues, etc.

Prepare written responses to hypotheticals. This is critical and should be done frequently as finals approach. To effectively use the limited amount of study group time, give the hypothetical to the students and have them write their proposed answers in advance. Set a maximum amount of time they have to write just as if it was a real exam. As a group, discuss how the exam answer should have been written, using a sample answer as a guide. Make sure the students are using IRAC.

To ensure that students do not lose sight of the "big picture," end each study group with a closure activity. Suggested closure activities include (1) having the students summarize the legal concept(s) covered in the session; (2) having the students summarize the learning or exam strategies discussed in the session; (3) asking the students to write down those strategies or legal concepts that are still confusing to them or will require additional practice; and (4) asking the students how they can use the strategies covered in the session while preparing for class, preparing for exams or writing exams.

Finally, a few words about hypotheticals: Whenever possible, use exams previously given by the professor for whom you are serving as an Academic Fellow and for which there is a sample answer. If no such exams are available or your group has exhausted the available supply, use commercial questions for which sample answers are given. Also, when working on exam writing, make sure the students understand that they must argue both sides in an exam answer when appropriate and that they must discuss all elements of a cause of action. For example, if on a negligence question they conclude there is no duty, they still must discuss breach, causation, and damage unless the call of the question only asks about duty.

First and last study group sessions

At the first meeting of your study group, you should obtain the name of each student, as well as their telephone number and email address, so that you can contact the members of the group in the event you need to reschedule a session for any reason. You also should tell the students how you can be reached. Explain that the purpose of the group is not to simply help them learn the black letter law. Instead, the goal is to help them develop the skills they need to be able to determine what the law is and to improve their performance on exams. Also explain that, because they all will be contributing and learning from one another, regular attendance is critical if the group is to be successful. Finally, for year long courses, encourage the students at the beginning of the spring semester to review their first semester final exams with their professors. Students should review all of their exams, not just those on which they did poorly, so that they learn not only what they did wrong but also what they did right on their exams.

The last study group session for a given semester should coincide with the last week of classes for that semester.

Weekly report forms

Each Academic Fellow must complete and submit a weekly report form indicating the number of students who attended office hours, which students attended the small study group session, and the activities conducted during the study group session. These forms are available on the website at <http://www.chapman.edu/law/students/AAP/fellows/default.asp>. The reports are due by noon on Monday for the previous week. The completed forms can be dropped off at the Academic Achievement Center or emailed to the Director for Academic Achievement. This report is essential to the Director's ability to track the program and make any necessary adjustments or improvements. The Director relies on you to turn in the reports weekly. Please do not wait for reminders.

Employment forms

All Academic Fellows must complete the pink employment form in order to be paid for their services. The completed form must be submitted to the Career Development office located at 434 N. Glassell. You must bring identification and your social security card with you when you drop off the form.

Compensation

Academic Fellows will receive an hourly rate of pay equal to that which is paid to a research assistant in the same year of law school as the Academic Fellow. Academic Fellows will be paid for office hours and for the time during which their study group meets, as well as two to three hours per week of preparation time. If requested by the professor and approved in advance by the Director of Academic Achievement, an Academic Fellow also will be paid for time spent attending the course for which they are an Academic Fellow. Paychecks can be picked up at the Cashier's Office on the 10th and 26th of each month.

Timesheets

Timesheets are to be completed and submitted to the Director of Academic Achievement for approval by the 14th and second to last working day of each month. Use a blue form if you qualify for work study; otherwise, use the pink form. Failure to submit your completed timesheet in a timely manner will delay your paycheck until the next pay period and causes a lot of headaches for the Payroll Office so submit your forms on time.

Available materials

If you do not have a copy of any book used in the course for which you are an Academic Fellow, see if the professor has a complimentary copy that you can use. If the professor is unable to provide you with a copy, see the Director of Academic Achievement. Also, the Academic Achievement Center has a large library of resource materials to assist you in your preparation for office hours and for the small study groups. These resources include flash cards, commercial outlines, hornbooks, sample essay questions, multiple choice questions, and prior exams. Additional resources are available on the Internet as follows:

<http://lessons.cali.org> You may need to get a password from the reference librarian in the law library before you can access the CALI materials.

<http://stu.findlaw.com/outlines/> This site has both course outlines and exams for several first year courses.

Photocopying

See the Director of Academic Achievement if you need any materials copied for use with your small study group.

Attendance

By the Academic Fellows:

Because your job is to model how to be a good law student, it is important that you keep to the meeting schedule to which you have agreed for the semester. Conflicts do, however, occur on occasion in which case you should promptly notify the students and reschedule any missed session(s). Notify the Director of Academic Achievement of any sessions that are rescheduled. Also, start and end study sessions on time. Starting study group sessions on time will encourage the students to be prompt and avoid penalizing those students who are on time. Ending sessions on time demonstrates to the students in your group that you recognize they have other commitments and respect their schedules.

By the students:

As noted above, regular attendance by the students is critical if a study group is to succeed. For that reason, you are to take attendance at each study group session and submit this information to the Director of Academic Achievement on a weekly basis on the weekly report form discussed above. If a student in your study group has an attendance problem, please try and resolve this by having a private conversation with the student. If the student's attendance does not improve, please notify the Director of Academic Achievement.

If you need assistance

Contact the professor for whom you are serving as an Academic Fellow if you have any questions regarding the substantive law. The professor can also serve as a resource for both ideas and materials for your small study group. In addition, the Director of Academic Achievement is available to help in any way possible. Please feel free to contact the Director at any time with questions or concerns.