HIRSH HEALTH LAW AND POLICY PROGRAM

Overview

The Hirsh Health Law and Policy Program of The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services (SPHHS) offers unique educational opportunities to law students, practicing lawyers, and health professions students. Endowed by Harold and Jane Hirsh and home to GW’s joint degree programs in law and public health, the program is designed to foster an interdisciplinary approach to the study of health policy, health law, public health, and health care. The Hirsh Program’s overall goal is to advance a greater understanding regarding how the law influences and shapes all facets of health care and public health, as well as how the changing system affects traditional areas of the law. At the same time, the program seeks to achieve the pragmatic objectives of readying law degree candidates and practicing lawyers for the broad range of health law-related careers that are available today.

Established in 1997, the Hirsh Program is structured to allow students to take maximum advantage of its location in Washington, DC, the center of the national health policy and law debate. The program is designed to provide a solid grounding in individual and population health, from the health care and public health systems themselves to extensive coursework in advanced health policy and law. The program serves Juris Doctor (JD) and Master of Laws (LLM) candidates as well as lawyers pursuing health law careers and all manner of health profession students.

Joint Degree Admissions Information

Applicants to the joint law-public health degree/certificate program may apply for admission to SPHHS at the time they apply to the Law School or after admission to the Law School. JD candidates who do not apply concurrently to the Law School and SPHHS are encouraged to file the MPH or Certificate application by the spring semester of their first year of law school. LLM candidates are encouraged to apply to SPHHS at the time they apply to the Law School or during their first semester on campus.

Applicants to the joint law-public health program must complete the application processes for both the GW Law School (JD/LLM) and for the School of Public Health and Health Services (MPH/Certificate). Admission to the joint degree program requires admissions acceptances from both Schools. However, because admission to each School is separate and distinct, applicants who are accepted by one School but not the other are free to enroll in the School to which they have been accepted.

Applications for both programs are available on the Internet (Law School: http://www.law.gwu.edu/Admissions/Pages/Default.aspx; SPHHS: http://sphhs.gwu.edu/admissions/). Whether applying simultaneously to both Schools or as a current GW Law student, applicants must complete the SOPHAS Application as indicated at the SPHHS website.

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**Program Costs**

SPHHS coursework taken while enrolled as a full- or part-time JD or LLM candidate is charged at the Law School tuition rate. The SPHHS tuition and fees rate are charged for semesters when no Law School courses are taken, including summers. Lawyers pay the SPHHS tuition and fees rate.

**Internship/Research Opportunities**

The Hirsh Program offers extensive assistance in arranging internships in congressional offices, federal agencies, and the hundreds of national health organizations located in and throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Through its affiliation with the Department of Health Policy, the program also engages in extensive law-related health policy research, offering Hirsh Program students paid and unpaid training opportunities during their period of study. Please visit the Department’s website at http://www.gwhealthpolicy.org for a description of the types of research in which it engages.

**Alumni**

The Hirsh Program maintains an active alumni group of lawyers and health professionals practicing in the D.C. area and throughout the country. Graduates of the Hirsh Program routinely accept positions at leading law firms, federal and state agencies, consulting firms, and universities in D.C. and other cities. The breadth of placements regularly attained by graduates in both the public and private sector illustrates the opportunities afforded under the program. Once in their chosen field of practice, alumni of the program recognize that their joint studies in policy, law, and public health are an invaluable asset on the job. Alumni in the practice of health law, on the one hand, report that their training in the SPHHS enables them to understand the myriad aspects of the health care and public health systems, including their structure, financing, and terminology. On the other hand, Hirsh Program alumni who spend their days as health professionals indicate that their training in the law earns them added respect from their employers and added credibility from the health care providers, agencies, and companies with which they interact.

**Additional Information**

Additional information regarding the Hirsh Program can be found at http://sphhs.gwu.edu/hirsh/. Or, contact Joel Teitelbaum, J.D., LL.M., Director of the Hirsh Program, at (202) 994-4233 or joelt@gwu.edu. For information about SPHHS admissions, contact Tracie Seward, Assistant Director of Admissions, at (202) 994-0554 or tseward@gwu.edu.