University of Pennsylvania is the new model for Law schools

According to an official American ranking, Yale, Harvard and Stanford have the best Law schools in the United States. They occupy the top three positions of such ranking. Why are these schools better than the others? It is certainly because of their reputation. However, the model for any school in the world which expects to be the most prestigious school in its own country may be, very soon, the University of Pennsylvania, Law School.

Penn Law, as it is known, currently places the seventh position in the American ranking. Starting this year, the school began reformulating its concept of teaching. Instead of molding brilliant theorists, Penn Law wants to prepare professionals, who succeed in their careers after graduation - with high assurance of success when they enter into the labor market.

This can be a valuable strategy for schools which want to attract students who desire to have successful careers, rather than just getting a degree. In the United States this is particularly important, because the best way to verify the success of a school is the success of its alumni in the labor market.

The goal of Penn Law is to train the most knowledgeable and, therefore, most competitive professionals in the market. Therefore, the school now offers dual programs, mixing Law and other professional areas in which lawyers have been involved.

The latest "release" of Penn Law, as announced by The National Law Journal on Monday (8/5), was an integrated program mixing Law and Engineering, with specialization in technology. The school believes that, in the real world, lawyers will act increasingly in the world of internet and computers, as well as intellectual property amongst other areas of technology.

Earlier, the faculty launched Law programs enriched with courses in business and economics. A twelve week program, for example, aims to provide the law students with practical knowledge of management, leadership, ability to take strategic decisions, finance and accounting.

Penn Law believes that the future of the legal profession is in specialization. More interdisciplinary programs are being structured, as Law and Medicine, and Law and Arts and Sciences (which in the United States includes communication). News about the programs of business and technology for lawyers can be found on the school's website, as well as in The National Law Journal.

Americans have discussed for a long time, the necessity for lawyers to take additional courses such as legal management, technology, finance and others. As reported by *Conjur*, firms specialized in the legal aspects of technology and sciences are still at the top of the pyramid. A professional with technological knowledge, either in computer science, engineering, medicine, chemistry, biotechnology or any other area of knowledge, and with the skills of a lawyer, is a valuable asset for any company that requires specialized legal services.

However, this is the first time that this interaction of courses has been implemented in a university program, both in the J.D. and LL.M. programs.

The initial investment for the implementation of the Detkin Clinic of Intellectual Property and Technology at Penn Law was made by Peter Detkin, who is a lawyer and a businessman, founder of Intellectual Ventures and member of the board of the University of Pennsylvania, School of Engineering. "My career has developed by the intersection of Law and technology," he said in an article published on the website of the University, to explain the why he believes interested lawyers should specialize in this area.

Before taking classes in the technology field, law students must fulfill some requirements such as taking classes of "Introduction to Intellectual Property" and "Patents Law." "Nowadays, lawyers who work on patents, copyright, intellectual property, internet regulation, privacy, national security and many other areas must have a good knowledge of technology," says Dean Michael Fitts of Penn Law.

The program "Law and Technology" at Penn Law will be offered in 2014 for regular J.D. and LL.M. programs, in Law and Engineering, which will require four years of study. In the first year, students take classes of Law; in the

second year, students take classes of Engineering; and in the subsequent two years they take classes in both areas, concomitantly.

The program that mixes Law and business will be divided into four modules: 1) finance and accounting, 2) leadership and organizational project; 3) strategic decision-making and leadership, and 4) competitive advantage: developing a strong personal brand.

In the first module, topics such as terminology and accounting process, financial decision making, analysis of financial reports and key performance indicators shall be covered. In the second, types of organization, leading with emotional intelligence, organizational influence and persuasion, leading teams and understanding the dynamics of teams. In the third, critical analyses the real world, real-time decisions, planning in times of uncertainty, decision making and leadership, planning guided by discovery shall be covered. In the fourth module, will focus on the development of personal branding.

Penn Law wants to train lawyers "who are leaders in their fields." There is no place, therefore, for students who are not serious about their studies and careers.

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