

A New Open Letter to Law School Deans about Privacy Law Scholars and Curriculum

August 1, 2023

Dear Dean,

We are writing to you and other law school deans to urge you to prioritize offering more courses and hiring more faculty in the information privacy law field.

We previously wrote an [open letter to you](#) before the pandemic, and we wish to send you another letter now because recent developments have strengthened our contentions below.

We call on you to consider taking one or more of the following actions:

- 1. Hire more faculty members who focus their work and teaching on privacy law and technology issues.**
- 2. Add courses to the curriculum to cover privacy law issues.**

There are several reasons why we believe now is the time for urgent action:

- Privacy law is growing dramatically in the U.S. Privacy law consists of torts, contract law, constitutional law, administrative law, and other areas of law. There are nearly three dozen federal laws pertaining to privacy. We are witnessing a recent blizzard of state privacy legislation, with 10 states having passed broad consumer privacy laws in the past few years and with bills advancing in many more states.
- Privacy law is expanding throughout the world. More than 160 countries have comprehensive privacy laws, and many countries have numerous narrower privacy laws.
- With mounting concerns over AI, new regulations are being devised in the EU and the US, and lawyers are being asked to guide companies on a wide array of issues that AI raises. Many members of our field are writing the most cutting-edge AI scholarship, as many AI issues involve privacy. AI will be transformative, and law schools need privacy/tech faculty or else they risk being left behind.
- Currently, the vast majority of law schools lack at least one full-time faculty member who writes about and teaches privacy law issues. A majority of law schools lack

even one privacy law course, and many such courses are small seminars or courses taught sporadically by adjuncts.

- There are tremendous job opportunities in privacy law. Nearly every one of the AmLaw top 100 law firms has a privacy and cybersecurity practice. These practices are quite large, often with as many as 30-50 lawyers. Most medium and large size companies have chief privacy officers. Law students interested in privacy now have the opportunity for many kinds of practice, including litigation, compliance, transactional work, public policy and advocacy. In addition to large law firms, companies are looking to hire in house. Plaintiffs, governments, and NGOs increasingly need attorneys for privacy law matters. The International Association of Privacy Professionals has 80,000 members, and it is growing by 25-30% or more each year. Privacy law is one of just 15 specialty areas accredited by the ABA.
- There is an enormous amount of privacy law scholarship and a large annual event called the Privacy Law Scholars Conference (now in its 15th year). In Brian Leiter's list of the top 10 most-cited law and technology scholars, 9 out of the 10 have written primarily about privacy law issues.
- Many different privacy law courses can be of great benefit to students, including a general course in information privacy law as well as courses on AI, cybersecurity, computer crime, comparative privacy law, consumer privacy law, and others. There are currently three casebooks on information privacy law, as well as several casebooks on cybersecurity law, computer crime, consumer privacy law, EU privacy law, and other topics.
- Having dedicated faculty members focusing on privacy/tech opens up significant revenue streams for law schools. For example, the National Science Foundation issues annual calls for technology-related research. Privacy law professors (including many on this letter) are frequently co-PIs on multimillion dollar NSF grants. Grant-making organizations like the Knight Foundation may help fund new centers and programs, but only at schools with relevant faculty. Additionally, being on the cutting-edge of privacy/tech/AI is inspiring to alumni donors.

We thus strongly encourage you to hire more faculty members who focus on information privacy law issues and to add courses to your curriculum.

If you have any questions, many of us would be delighted to answer them and discuss the field with you.

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