Top-Tier Technology

Beneath its façade of traditional architecture, Anheuser-Busch Hall features one of the most technologically advanced infrastructures, earning the School of Law a place among the nation's '25 Most-Wired Law Schools.'

by Judy H. Watts

Affectonately dubbed A-B Hall by its inhabitants, the two-year-old building housing Washington University School of Law embraces continuity and change, as does the law itself. Dedicated to teaching, learning, and research, Anheuser-Busch Hall is on the one hand traditional—a classically elegant structure designed to inspire. But it also boasts new-millennium technology installed to empower.

"The National Jurist" recently ranked Washington University School of Law fourth among '25 Most-Wired Law Schools,' reported Philip Berwick, associate dean for information resources. The ranking is based upon a survey that compiled data from 140 law schools on computer access, registration, computer use in the classrooms, and on-line student services.

The law school's technology is top-tier in broader terms, too. Because the infrastructure, equipment, and support services are far ahead of the curve, law professors are continually discovering ways to enhance their teaching. And students are benefiting from sophisticated tools and resources that can help them become outstanding practitioners in an electronic age. From hundreds of data ports spread throughout the Law Library to Pentium computers in the Stolar Partnership Computer Lab to the power packed into the Shepard-Mendhall Electronic Teaching Lab, technology supports excellence everywhere.

A "Very Robust" Wiring System

The first thing to know about the School's connectivity is that "its wiring systems are built for speed and high connectivity," said Berwick, who heads Multimedia.
Services, Computing Services, and the Law Library. "We run Fast Ethernet, which provides up to 100 megabit through-put throughout the building. This gives us the flexibility to incorporate high bandwidth, video on demand, video conferencing, and other streaming technologies to the desktop."

A learning tool whose utility is amplified by this power is an interactive CD-ROM, The Interactive Courtroom. As students participate in various courtroom situations, the computer software reacts to the students' responses (electronic judges sustain or overrule objections, for example) and later issues performance reports.