

## Alumni and Students Sue Golden Gate University Over Closure of J.D. Program



An uproar has ensued as the Alumni Association, alongside four current students, has taken legal action against Golden Gate University School of Law. Filed in California state court, the lawsuit aims to halt the university's intended closure of its juris doctor (J.D.) program.

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### Background and Rationale for Legal Action

Golden Gate University officials dropped a bombshell in late November, revealing plans to terminate the J.D. program come May. The decision comes as a response to financial challenges exacerbated by declining enrollment rates, a sluggish job market for graduates, and concerning pass rates in the bar exam. Despite the closure of the 123-year-old J.D. program, the institution intends to maintain offerings in non-J.D. law-related graduate and undergraduate degrees.

### Allegations of Breach of Contract and Mismanagement

The plaintiffs' lawsuit, filed in San Francisco, alleges a breach of contract on the part of the university. They claim that students were kept uninformed about the dire financial state of the law school. Furthermore, they argue that administrators have failed to provide adequate transfer options for affected students.

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Golden Gate University swiftly responded to the lawsuit, denouncing it as "frivolous" and expressing confidence in its dismissal. However, the legal battle also targets Golden Gate's president, David Fike, accusing him of mismanagement. Allegations against Fike include leveraging loans against the law school campus, launching unproven degree programs, and implementing tuition-free models that ultimately led to financial strain.

### Call for Transparency and Accountability

The complaint voices incredulity at the university's decision to offer free tuition and then encountering financial insolvency before those students could complete their degrees. Attorney Ryan Griffith, a Golden Gate law alumnus representing the plaintiffs, underscored the importance of the judicial process in uncovering information that university officials have allegedly concealed from stakeholders.

### Legal Objectives and Implications

In their pursuit of justice, the plaintiffs are seeking a preliminary injunction to halt the closure of the J.D. program and are also demanding damages. Notably, the complaint highlights that the closure plan lacks approval from the American Bar Association, a crucial regulatory body in legal education.

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