

Tech law school sinks to fourth tier

By Linda Robertson
Staff Writer

Texas Tech's School of Law has seen some tough times, but things will be getting worse before they get better.

The most recent round of troubles came in the form of a magazine article published in *U.S. News and World Report*.

Monday's online edition of the magazine published a story about higher education and the ranking system for law schools. In it, Tech's law school ranking dropped from the third tier to the fourth tier.

The article also states that Tech's

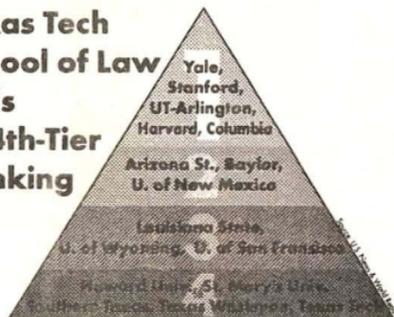
law school now has the highest student-to-faculty ratio of any law school in the country, while having among the worst expenditure-per-student rates.

The article defines criteria for different tiers being such things as bar exam pass rates, faculty to student ratios, and undergraduate grade point averages of students in the school. The article also states the ranking is not absolute, and the methods used were not scientific.

Frank Newton, dean of the law school, said the ranking upsets him.

"The ranking is like a beauty contest," he said. "Forty percent of the criteria is by ballot, and 60 percent

Texas Tech School of Law Falls to 4th-Tier Ranking



is based on objective data."

The tier system evaluates 174 law schools in the nation, Newton said, with Yale, Harvard and Columbia Universities in the first tier.

"Really, beyond the first tier, the differences between the schools are very slight," he said. "However, not-

ing that the difference is slight doesn't sell magazines."

Newton said the student to faculty ratio is not accurate.

"The American Bar Association calculates student to faculty ratio based on how many professors are tenured or on the tenure track," he said. "We have people teaching these classes, but since they are not on the tenure track, they don't count."

Newton said the actual ratio of students to professors is 23-to-1.

The expenditure per student issue, Newton said, will be better soon.

Newton added the rankings have no bearing on the whether graduat-

ing law students will find a job.

"A person who is hiring won't know or look at the tier system," he said.

David Rogers, a graduating third-year law student from Austin, said he disagrees.

"Dropping in rank lowers the value of the education," he said. "It makes it much harder to get good jobs, much less, high-paying jobs."

He said not many Tech law school graduates get jobs out of law school such as being a U.S. Supreme Court clerk.

"Being from tier one will follow

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you your entire career," he said. "So will being from a tier-four school. Unfortunately, what follows you won't be good."

Wes Ogilvie, also a third-year law student from Austin, said he did not think the rankings counted for anything except for those students coming to law school at Tech or any other college.

"I don't think anyone uses the rankings except maybe the law firms in New York," he said.

Kay Fletcher, assistant dean for career services, said other things, besides law school rankings, would make a difference in the student's career.

"Top students from any law school will be competitive in the job

market," she said. "The job search is so individual that the rank of the school is not as important as the student's law school accomplishments."

Newton said, ultimately, the rankings are problematic for prospective students and not current students.

"For the student using the ranking to choose a law school, the ranking system is misleading," he said. "With the new faculty that's coming, we hope to be back to tier three next year and work toward being in tier two."