

#2 Purposes and Objectives of Law Schools Beyond Educating Students (Research, Capacity Building, Community Service and Outreach)

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Beyond their primary goal of educating students,¹ the purposes and objectives of law schools include the following:

- Promoting and disseminating faculty research and scholarship;
- Promoting a vibrant intellectual culture through academic programs;
- Breaking down barriers and building relationships, internally and externally, at home and abroad; and
- Making public service and pro bono activities a prominent part of law students' and lawyers' lives.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Rather it is meant to emphasize the major purposes of a law school in the twenty-first century. Ideally, law schools will have the opportunity to articulate and reflect on these purposes and objectives in their mission statements, as well as in their annual goal statements. Below I set out more fully what these objectives include.

1) Promoting and Disseminating Faculty Research and Scholarship

Law school faculties should generate new knowledge beneficial to society and provide the intellectual and ethical leadership to shape emerging world views. Faculty should forge new scholarly paths and influence the field of law through their research and professional contributions. Related to its core mission of educating students, law school faculties should epitomize the scholar-teacher ideal by blending scholarship, teaching and service into an inspiring whole.

In addition to developing students into professionals, law schools have an obligation to develop and mentor their junior faculty, including exposing them to the values of the institution. Law schools should strive to provide additional opportunities to junior faculty participate in legal

¹I have not included important objectives in this essay that closely relate to educating students such as developing thoughtful, responsible professionals.

and interdisciplinary communities relevant to their research.

Law schools should facilitate the external funding of faculty research through grants, but should also provide the support necessary for faculty to receive the exposure and external recognition that their scholarship deserves.

In the United States, as in many other jurisdictions, law schools provide the main vehicles for scholarly publication through student edited law journals. Today, these school-sponsored legal journals account for approximately 400 of the law related journals that publish scholarly articles in the United States. My own law school supports twelve legal publications.

2) Promoting a Vibrant Intellectual Culture Through Academic Programs

One of the fundamental purposes of a law school is to engage in the great ideas and issues of our time. Through its research, centers and institutes a law school should participate in national and international dialogues on important issues. Conferences, symposia and colloquia are not just opportunities to advance faculty scholarship, but are opportunities to harness the intellectual leadership and dedication of law faculty to address the key issues of our time.

At my own school, we have a tradition of offering numerous diverse conferences and lectures during academic year that engage the community, the nation and the world. To give you a sense our commitment to this endeavor I will report that last year our conferences gathered together more than 8,000 lawyers, students, judges, scholars and other professionals from around the nation and the world to attend our approximately 100 conferences. These events involved almost 900 speakers who, together with attendees, represented over 600 national and international organizations, 120 law firms, 130 U.S. and international law schools and universities, and 20 embassies. The programs addressed an array of topics including financial regulation, the prohibition of torture, commercial arbitration, human rights, international trade, intellectual property, the environment, health care reform, military justice, Indian law, asylum and refugee law, access to medicine, antitrust law, disability law and genocide, among others. Many events were webcast and covered by the media, with related materials widely distributed, thereby expanding even further the outreach and access to important information. A number of events are cosponsored with national and international institutions and organizations.

3) Breaking down Barriers and Building Relationships, Internally and Externally, at Home and Abroad

One aspect of breaking down barriers, of course, is addressing the barrier to entry into the profession. Inclusiveness and diversity should be the hallmark of a law school. Law schools should reflect and value diversity as an essential educational tool. The academic and organizational strength of a law school is enhanced by its inclusiveness and respect for the unique identity of individuals reflected in their cultural traditions, beliefs and viewpoints. Law schools should embrace diversity in its broadest sense, including diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, nationality, disability, socioeconomic standing, and intellectual viewpoint.

Another barrier is the one that often exists between the ivory tower and the rest of the world. Law schools should strive to bring the world to the law school and the law school to the

world. Academic life and research excellence can be enriched in profound ways by worldwide connections. National and international programs, partnerships and relationships enable law schools to have national influence and global reach.

For instance, at my law school, we have a program that promotes constitutional literacy by sending third year law students into disadvantaged public high schools in Washington, D.C. to teach students about the Constitution through cases that involve students' rights.

Engaging alumni and the bar and bench in the life of the law school is an important objective as well. Many schools including my own have introduced a jurist in residence program that allows a sitting judge to become fully integrated into the life of the law school for a couple of weeks during the semester.

Law schools provide opportunities and benefits to the entire university, should they be in that setting, and to other academic institutions around the globe. Law schools should participate in interdisciplinary inquiry transcending traditional boundaries among academic disciplines and between the law school and other schools within the university. Law schools can benefit from outreaches, engagements and partnerships with institutions on all continents.

4) Making Public Service and Pro Bono Activities a Prominent Part of Law Students' and Lawyers' Lives

Law schools should actively encourage a commitment to public service and social justice. Many law students enroll in law school because they are drawn to public service. A law degree can be a powerful tool for change, and students should be reminded of this fact. Law schools, like other academic institutions, serve as incubators of ideas, but they can also provide a space to turn ideas into action and action into service. Law schools offer innumerable opportunities for students and faculty to connect their study and research to contemporary issues of public affairs writ large. Law schools should act on their values through political and social engagement. Law schools can provide public service opportunities for students, faculty and staff to participate in. Moreover, law schools can act as a model for others in their steadfast sense of ethics and a vigorous commitment to social responsibility.

Law schools typically carry out these responsibilities through in-house legal clinics, pro-bono summer scholarships, loan forgiveness for graduates who are employed in public interest work, pro bono pledge programs as well as other academic programs on topics related to public interest law.