

PENN STATE LAW

at University Park



Strategic Plan 2015-2020

April 2015

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Introduction

The next five years will be dynamic for Penn State Law. Since 2006, Penn State's Dickinson School of Law has operated as a unified law school on two campuses: University Park and Carlisle. In June 2014, the ABA approved Penn State's proposal to operate the two campuses as two separate and fully approved law schools: Penn State Law in University Park and Dickinson Law in Carlisle.

Starting in fall 2015, the two schools will admit separate first-year classes and begin a two-year transition leading to full separation by the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year. During the transition to fully separate operations, the two schools will cooperate to provide a unified curriculum for students admitted to the unified two campus law school before fall 2015 until the last students admitted to the unified school graduate in spring 2017.

The separation advances the goals of the University Park faculty and administration to provide students with extraordinary education and career opportunities and to be recognized as one of the leading law schools in the United States. This strategic plan provides a framework for achieving these goals.

Penn State Law is grounded in our Foundational Principles. We will continue to educate a diverse group of highly-credentialed national and international students in the substantive knowledge and professional skills essential to the legal profession. We will maintain a diverse faculty engaged in transformative research and teaching. The work of the faculty will be supported by innovative and effective administrators and staff.

Throughout the next five years, Penn State Law will pursue five Strategic Priorities:

1. ***Promote Scholarly and Teaching Excellence.*** We will promote an intellectual environment encouraging transformative research and teaching.
2. ***Expand Career Opportunities for Students and Graduates.*** We will orient law school programs toward providing students and graduates with expanded career opportunities in the legal profession.

3. **Enhance the Investment Value of Legal Education.** We will enhance the investment value of legal education by managing resources efficiently, seeking new revenue sources, and controlling costs.
4. **Expand Relevance and Reach.** We will contribute to the intellectual product of Penn State University by collaborating with University colleagues in other disciplines and taking maximum advantage of the opportunities available on the campus of a world-class university. We will also seek new opportunities to expand access to legal knowledge.
5. **Build New Partnerships.** We will build on existing relationships and seek new partnerships with alumni and friends of Penn State Law to enrich our programs, increase student opportunities, and enhance our reputation.

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Mission

*To educate a diverse student body in the intellectual foundations, ethical principles, and practical skills necessary for success in today's legal professions;
To produce scholarship responsive to legal and social needs and foster a culture of service within the legal profession and society;
To contribute to the intellectual life and mission of The Pennsylvania State University.*

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Vision

To be one of the nation's leading law schools, dedicated to advancing the law throughout the world and transforming lives through legal education.

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Foundational Principles

The Foundational Principles embody Penn State Law's identity and are essential for our success.

Our community consists of:

- ***Exceptional students*** with strong credentials and the potential to become leaders in today's legal professions, both in the United States and around the world.
- ***Outstanding faculty members*** who are premier scholars, passionate teachers, and dedicated contributors to the legal profession and society.
- ***Innovative and effective administrators and staff*** who enable the endeavors of faculty and students.

We value:

- ***Diversity of background and experience.*** Students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and experiences enrich our learning community by providing multiple perspectives and divergent views. We will recruit highly qualified and diverse students, faculty, and staff, and maintain our international graduate law program, which currently includes students from over 25 countries.
- ***Integrity, Ethics and Professionalism.*** All members of the law school community are called upon to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. Faculty and students are governed by university conduct rules. Students must also comply with the law school's Honor Code, and faculty members, who are attorneys, are subject to rules of professional responsibility. Every J.D. candidate completes a three-credit course which focuses on the ethical challenges faced by lawyers and teaches rules of professional conduct and ethical aspects of legal practice.

We offer:

- ***A relevant, comprehensive curriculum*** to promote foundational legal knowledge and introduction to specialized disciplines, higher-order thinking and problem solving, superb written and oral communication, and outstanding legal practice skills.
- ***Career counseling and services*** to complement our students' legal education and prepare them for immediate placement in the legal profession.
- ***An intellectually stimulating learning environment*** to foster a lifelong interest in law and justice, courage in the face of adversity, respect for diverse ideas, beliefs, and cultures, and commitment to leadership in service of others.

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Strategic Priorities

Our Strategic Priorities express our intention to pursue continuing excellence by focusing our efforts in the following areas.

1. ***Promote Scholarly and Teaching Excellence.*** We will promote an intellectual environment encouraging transformative research and teaching.

The faculty is the foundation of a great law school. The very best faculty members transform the lives of students by imparting foundational legal concepts and leading them on a journey of demanding, high-order critical thinking in preparation for a lifetime in the legal profession.

Faculty members also serve society and the legal profession through research, publication, and other forms of participation in the public sphere. Faculty scholarship benefits students by ensuring their faculty members remain engaged at the cutting edge of legal thought and practice.

At Penn State Law, we embrace the model of preeminent scholars leading students on the formative journey of rigorous classroom, clinical, and co-curricular learning. We will recruit and retain legal scholars of the highest promise and accomplishment. We will publicize and reward the scholarly achievements of our faculty.

Supporting Strategy 1.1. Develop a comprehensive strategy for scholarly excellence. The strategy will delineate specific steps to promote academic research and publication in high-profile outlets. The strategy will include an examination of incentives and support mechanisms for scholarly productivity. In August 2014, and consistent with the priority Penn State Law places on scholarly achievement, we established and filled a new administrative position to assist the dean with developing and executing a strategy to promote research.

Supporting Strategy 1.2. Pursue opportunities to increase the number and frequency of visits to Penn State Law by top scholars. Such visits, whether extended academic appointments or visits of shorter duration, will enhance opportunities for students and faculty to interact with other distinguished legal scholars and increase the visibility of the research and scholarly accomplishments of Penn State Law faculty.

Supporting Strategy 1.3. Pursue maximum bar pass rates for all graduates. Law school graduates must pass a state bar exam before practicing law in the United States or the District of Columbia. The majority of law school graduates sit for this exam in the jurisdiction of their choice soon after law school graduation. Although the success of any law school's program of legal education cannot be measured exclusively by its graduates' bar passage rates, bar passage is a significant and easily measurable learning outcome. Penn State Law will continue to offer curriculum and advisory services to students before and after graduation to maximize their bar exam success.

Supporting Strategy 1.4. Establish and promote learning outcomes that help ensure Penn State Law maintains a rigorous program of legal education that prepares students for admission to the bar and for effective, ethical and responsible participation as members of the legal profession, consistent with University policy and newly promulgated American Bar Association standards. Such learning outcomes will include, at a minimum: competency in knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law; legal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and written and oral communication; exercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities; as well as various professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation in the legal profession. To measure and improve learning and to provide meaningful feedback to students, Penn State Law will use both formative and summative assessment methods in its curriculum.

2. *Expand Career Opportunities for Students and Graduates.* We will orient law school programs toward providing students and graduates with expanded career opportunities in the legal profession.

Penn State Law is committed to helping every graduate obtain the employment they seek. Our Career Services Office will work with students from their first year through graduation and beyond to meet this commitment. We will continually reevaluate our curriculum based on dialogue with external audiences such as prospective employers, judges, and the bar, to ensure that the curriculum provides the most relevant substantive courses. Likewise, we will focus on enhancing experiential opportunities like externships and clinics to ensure our graduates have the practical and communicative skills – including excellent legal writing skills – which they need to excel in the legal profession.

Supporting Strategy 2.1. Use all the resources of Penn State Law and the University – including alumni, faculty, and other University units – to increase employment opportunities across geographic regions, practice areas, and employer type (e.g., private practice, government, in-house corporate, and non-profit).

Supporting Strategy 2.2. Continue to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum by reference to employment outcomes for our students and graduates.

Supporting Strategy 2.3. Review the externship program with the goal of expanding the number, variety, and geographic diversity of student work opportunities and increasing post-graduate employment. Develop specific strategies to create student opportunities for extended externships away from University Park.

Supporting Strategy 2.4. Increase public interest and pro bono legal service opportunities for our students.

3. *Enhance the Investment Value of Legal Education.* We will enhance the investment value of legal education by managing resources efficiently, seeking new revenue sources, and controlling costs.

Penn State Law is committed to providing an outstanding program of legal education at a reasonable cost. The relationship between the quality and cost of legal education requires continued careful analysis. We must maintain quality programs while ensuring that students, benefactors, and the University receive maximum return on their investments, and that legal education remains available to the best qualified students regardless of socio-economic status.

Supporting Strategy 3.1. Develop a budget strategy addressing the quality and cost of legal education at Penn State Law, including exploration of potential new revenue sources and cost-management measures.

4. *Expand Relevance and Reach.* We will contribute to the intellectual product of Penn State University by collaborating with University colleagues in other disciplines and taking maximum advantage of the opportunities available on the campus of a world-class university.

We will also seek new opportunities to expand access to legal knowledge.

The physical location of Penn State Law on the University Park campus of Penn State University provides a strategic advantage for the law school to contribute to and draw benefit from the research, teaching and service activities of colleagues and academic programs at Penn State University in areas that intersect with law.

Interdisciplinary opportunities include Penn State's School of International Affairs, which is co-located with Penn State Law in the Katz Building. The School of International Affairs offers faculty, curricular, and research opportunities often unavailable within a law school. Other interdisciplinary opportunities include shared academic programs, courses and faculty research initiatives with the Smeal College of Business, Eberly College of Science, College of Education, College of Earth and Mineral Science, College of Engineering, College of Health and Human Development, College of Information Sciences and Technology, College of Agricultural Sciences, School of Labor and Employment Relations, and the Hershey Medical Center.

Law students must enter the legal marketplace with a strong foundational knowledge of the law as well as highly developed critical thinking, communication, and legal practice skills. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, however, graduates who augment these fundamental abilities with a sophisticated understanding of the underlying non-legal issues and structures in which their clients operate will have an obvious and marketable advantage as lawyers. Penn State Law will ensure that our students have both opportunity and incentive to acquire knowledge outside the traditional discipline of law through an interdisciplinary law school curriculum, graduate level coursework, cross-disciplinary research projects, and clinics and internships, all consistent with the academic demands of a rigorous course of legal study.

The juris doctor degree is the core of our academic mission. In addition, we will continue to offer two international graduate law degree programs: Masters of Law (LL.M.) and Doctor of the Science of Law (S.J.D.). These programs expand our reputation for excellence globally, expand the international cultural awareness of our students and faculty, and provide

international students a superb education in U.S. law and legal systems. Penn State Law will also pursue new outlets for legal education, exploring opportunities to expand programs to adult professionals and undergraduates through residential and online programs.

Supporting Strategy 4.1. Pursue interdisciplinary opportunities and incentive students and faculty to collaborate with relevant Penn State units.

Supporting Strategy 4.2. Expand online programs, including those offered through Penn State's World Campus, with emphasis on the needs and interests of lawyers and persons in law-related professions outside the United States who seek deeper understanding of the U.S. legal system.

Supporting Strategy 4.3. Explore short-term programs for an international audience.

Supporting Strategy 4.4. Continue to develop the LL.M. program, with a particular focus on helping LL.M. students achieve the advanced English language proficiency necessary for their future careers.

Supporting Strategy 4.5. Continue to develop the S.J.D. program with a particular focus on enriching the research environment for students for whom English is a second language. In addition, continue to pursue an appropriate balance between faculty commitment to supervision of S.J.D. students and other research, teaching, and service opportunities.

5. *Build New Partnerships.* We will build on existing relationships and seek new partnerships with alumni and friends of Penn State Law to enrich our programs, increase student opportunities, and enhance our reputation.

Penn State Law will reinvigorate efforts to build relationships between faculty and students and supportive alumni and friends. These efforts will include a concerted focus on relationships with Dickinson School of Law

alumni, with Penn State alumni who have graduated from other law schools, and with institutions that support Penn State Law’s mission and vision.

Supporting Strategy 5.1. Establish a University Park-based Office of Development and Alumni Affairs.

Supporting Strategy 5.2. Create a Penn State Law advisory board and cultivate relationships with Penn State Law supporters to assist the dean and faculty with insights into the legal marketplace and practice, strategies for development, student employment, and outreach.

Supporting Strategy 5.3. Develop strategies for productive faculty engagement with alumni and friends.

Supporting Strategy 5.4. Develop strategies to share scholarly achievements and student accomplishments with interested stakeholders and audiences.

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Amplifying Our Values

Diversity

Fostering diversity must be recognized as being at the heart of our institutional viability and vitality, a core value of the academic mission, and a priority of the institution.

– A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010-2015

Diversity of background and experience is a core value of Penn State Law, and we recognize that diversity in our student body, faculty and staff enriches the educational and work environment of our school.

To help focus our diversity efforts, our Diversity Committee, comprised of faculty and staff, helps review matters of diversity at our school. As part of their

review in 2014-2015, the Committee considered Penn State's guiding *Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2010-2015* and specifically the seven Challenges set forth in that document. The Committee examines scholarship and recruitment practices, reviews academic support programs, and undertakes various improvements to other programs. We have already instituted some of these recommendations. One such initiative is the Minority Mentoring Program (MMP). The MMP is designed to help foster relationships between our minority students and faculty mentors. This program is a partnership between Penn State Law and the University's Equal Opportunity Planning Committee.

Recruiting and retaining a diverse student body is a key component of this core value. To advance this value, we regularly reach out to underrepresented groups through various recruitment initiatives, including active participation in diversity recruitment fairs, attendance at law fairs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving institutions, inviting students from underrepresented groups to visit our school and promoting educational programs designed to offer information to underrepresented groups about the legal field and the legal education offered at Penn State Law. Students studying at Penn State Law can take advantage of a variety of student organizations designed to bring together students with shared interests and experiences. These groups including the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association, Black Law Students Association, Minority Law Students Association, the Latino/a Law Student Association, the Muslim Legal Society and Outlaw, an organization focused on LGBT issues.

Diversity at Penn State Law is also reflected in our graduate law program, which, in 2013-2014, included approximately 100 students from 25 countries. These international students, most of whom are attorneys in their home countries, share the classroom and the law school experience with our J.D. students. Our international graduate student population enriches Penn State Law by contributing to the diversity of background, experience and perspective of our collective community.

Diversity in our workforce is important as well and through our hiring processes we hope to attract qualified candidates with a wide diversity of backgrounds.

Integrity and Professionalism

Integrity and courtesy are indispensable to the practice of law.

– from Penn State Law, *Statement on Professionalism*

Integrity, ethics and professionalism are core values of Penn State Law. Law students are taught these values and required to incorporate them into their conduct. Every new student at Penn State Law must sign the Statement of Professionalism, pledging integrity and professionalism at all times. Some facets of professionalism are expressed in an Honor Code for students, which is central to the educational program. The goal of the Honor Code is “to safeguard and promote the ideals of honor and integrity by prohibiting lying, cheating, stealing, and other dishonorable conduct.” The Honor Code is designed to protect the *Community of Trust* by which everyone at Penn State Law can enjoy the freedom to develop their full intellectual and personal potential. It sets forth not just the standards of behavior expected of our students, but also the process and procedures for handling alleged violations by students, including rights of the accused student, board procedures, sanctions, and appellate procedures. Student and faculty involvement in these procedures teaches our students how to treat one another fairly and with respect.

Penn State Law prepares its students in professional ethics and standards. Every J.D. candidate must complete a three-credit, Professional Responsibility course, which focuses on the ethical challenges faced by lawyers and teaches students the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and other ethical aspects of the practice of law. Moreover, issues of professional and ethical conduct arise and are addressed in many other classroom courses -- such as civil procedure, evidence, criminal procedure, and arbitration and mediation. These and other courses inquire into the obligations and roles of the lawyer in the operation of the justice system. Furthermore, beyond encountering these matters in classroom settings, students confront them in very real and demanding ways in the course of clinics, internships, and externships. In these programs, students interact with clients to whom they have ethical obligations, and they work with legal professionals who serve as role models and supervisors.

Integrity, ethics, and professionalism must be the hallmarks of every attorney. Accordingly, we will continue to emphasize the need for ethical behavior for all students, faculty and staff.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a way of thinking that concurrently considers the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of our decisions.

– Penn State’s Sustainability Planning Guidebook for Teams, 2014

At Penn State Law, we are fortunate to study and work in a new, state-of-the-art facility. Built in 2009, the Lewis Katz Building has sustainability built into its fabric. The building was designed to reduce energy consumption by maximizing the use of natural daylight in the common spaces; using motion sensors to turn lights on and off; and employing mechanical systems for operable windows and individual climate control in most offices. The Katz Building was constructed with a continuous green roof to help lessen the amount of rainwater runoff generated by the site. Also, various recycled materials were used in the building and surrounding landscape, and, on every floor, we have banks of waste receptacles that encourage the separate collection of trash, mixed office paper, cans, glass, plastics, and newspaper.

Our curriculum also supports the broader goals of sustainability. For example, we offer courses in energy law and policy; environmental law; oil and gas law; mediation of environmental and public conflicts; natural resources law; energy, international security and the global economy; and civil rights and civil liberties. We also offer an International Sustainable Development Projects Clinic and a Rural Economic Development Clinic, and collaborate with the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences on an Agricultural Law Resource and Reference Center. Through these courses and clinics, we prepare students to contribute to an environmentally healthy and equitable society.

We have received the recently distributed draft of Penn State’s Sustainability Planning Guidebook for Teams and will use it to explore new ways to improve sustainability at Penn State Law.

Our Future

Beginning in fall 2015, Penn State Law will operate separately from Dickinson Law (Carlisle) while both schools cooperate as partners in the education of students who enroll before fall 2015 in the unified Penn State Dickinson School of Law. This unique transition will take place during a challenging period for legal education. Although it may be tempting to delay bold initiatives during the transition, Penn State Law will act now to enhance its identity as a premier school on Penn State's University Park campus.

Any successful strategic plan begins with clear vision, continues with careful refinements arising from changing circumstances, and ultimately succeeds through diligent execution and follow-through. Penn State Law will pursue the priorities detailed in this Strategic Plan with a steadfast commitment to being one of the nation's leading law schools, dedicated to advancing the law throughout the world and transforming lives through legal education.

