

Annual Academic Assessment Report
Juris Doctor and Law Certificate Programs
University of Arkansas School of Law
July 26, 2017

Report annually to the Dean of the college/school the following:

- **Results of analysis of assessment of Student Learning Outcome**

The strategic planning committee has just begun a systematic curriculum assessment process, with the plan of evaluating one of the School of Law's primary programmatic learning outcomes each year. This year, the committee assessed the teaching of core competencies related to professional responsibility, including a programmatic assessment of coverage of core competencies in professional responsibility, including (1) the duty of competence; (2) the duty to communicate with clients; (3) professional obligations with regard to fees; (4) the duty of confidentiality; (5) obligations with regard to conflicts of interest; (6) the duty of candor towards tribunals and others; (7) pro bono obligations; and (8) other professional responsibilities identified by specific faculty members.

The committee asked faculty for information about the degree to which they teach and assess each those competencies, and the results were compiled in a comprehensive spreadsheet and shared with the faculty and the dean.

The data indicates that we are teaching and assessing all of the core competencies that we identified under professional responsibility, including the duties of competence, the obligation to communicate with clients, ethical responsibilities relating to fees, the requirements of confidentiality, conflicts of interest, the duty of candor to the tribunal, pro bono responsibilities, and other obligations identified by faculty. The Committee concluded that overall the law school is adequately addressing the professional responsibility learning outcome, and assessing their competence in all of these areas with our existing curriculum, as it is currently taught.

However, although we adequately cover all of the ethical responsibilities in our required courses and skills classes in particular, data collected in the mapping project suggested that none of the upper level electives included any substantive coverage of the pro bono obligations of lawyers.

Relevant to all program goals and learning outcomes, we continue to monitor bar exam performance and report our graduate's passage rates according to the American Bar Association's approach of monitoring calendar year graduates over a two-year cycle (four opportunities to sit for the bar). For our 2015 graduating class 113 of 130 (86.92%) passed a bar exam within two years.

- **Any changes to degree/certificate planned or made on the basis of the assessment and analysis**

At the faculty meeting at which the results of the survey covering the professional responsibility learning outcome were discussed, the strategic planning committee encouraged faculty to incorporate substantive coverage of the pro bono obligations of lawyers in upper level electives. At least three faculty members have indicated that they will incorporate such materials in their courses in future semesters.

- **Any changes to the assessment process made or planned.**

More broadly, the faculty adopted a revised statement of the minimum standards for law students, which will appear in the updated version of the Faculty Policies Manual at 3-701. The faculty also voted to revise our programmatic learning outcomes to emphasize a student learning focus as opposed to a teaching focus.

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Registrar increased scrutiny of course syllabi to ensure that all law school classes have suitable learning objectives stated for students in the class syllabus at the outset of each semester when the course is offered.

- **Plans for the 2017-18 Academic Year**

The strategic planning committee anticipates focusing its efforts on assessing the programmatic efforts to teach effective oral and written communication skills in the context of predictive, persuasive, and prescriptive application of the law (our programmatic learning outcome #3).

Student Performance and Improvement Measures. Our strategic planning committee (or a separate assessment committee) will review commonly employed approaches to assessing student learning in law schools and make recommendations to the faculty as to a more robust plan to quantify the performance of our students in each of the programmatic learning outcomes.

Law School Journals and Competitions. The faculty advising the Arkansas Law Review and the Journal of Food Law & Policy developed learning objectives for students participating in those activities. The Law Review also developed a rubric for assessment of its learning outcomes, which will be completed by the Editor-in-Chief and faculty advisor to the journal. The learning outcomes are listed below, and the assessment rubric is attached at the end of this report. We anticipate adoption of (or acquiescence to) those learning outcomes during the next academic year.

Learning Objectives of the Arkansas Law Review. Upon completion of the requirements for membership on the ARKANSAS LAW REVIEW, students will be able to:

- Efficiently and thoroughly research a legal topic using both primary and secondary sources.
- Effectively use and synthesize authorities to explain applicable legal principles and rules.
- Develop, support, and critique legal arguments using precedent and policy.
- Write about legal issues in a concise, clear, and organized manner.
- Demonstrate proficiency with Bluebook citation.
- Technically and substantively edit their own work and the work of others, including evaluating and revising for accuracy, effective organization, clarity, and style.
- Demonstrate professionalism by meeting deadlines, incorporating feedback, and communicating promptly and respectfully with peers, faculty, and others.

The Board of Advocates has begun work on a statement of programmatic learning outcomes for all students earning credit in connection with our competitions. We anticipate adoption of (or acquiescence to) those learning outcomes during the next academic year. The faculty will then develop a comprehensive plan for assessing student achievement of the outcomes.

Certificates. The faculty teaching in the Business Law Certificate and Criminal Law Certificate programs have developed learning objectives for each certificate (listed below). We anticipate adoption of (or acquiescence to) those learning outcomes by the full faculty during the next academic year. The faculty will then develop a comprehensive plan for assessing student achievement of the outcomes.

Business Law Certificate: Students who successfully complete the requirements for the Business Law Certificate will:

- (a) demonstrate proficiency in explaining and analyzing the legal and regulatory implications of common business representations;
- (b) be able to draft documents relevant to typical business formations or commercial transactions; and
- (c) demonstrate an understanding of the role of counsel to businesses, business owners, or business management, as well as an appreciation of the ethical implications of representing each discrete group.

Criminal Law Certificate: Students who successfully complete the requirements for the Criminal Law Certificate will:

- (a) demonstrate proficiency in analyzing constitutional issues, interviewing clients, and litigating on criminal matters;
- (b) be able to draft motions and pleadings relevant to typical criminal practice; and
- (c) demonstrate an understanding of the role of counsel in criminal matters including, the state and federal constitutional and ethical obligations of prosecution and defense counsel, in various levels of criminal cases including pretrial, trial, direct appeal, and collateral proceedings.

Law Review Learning Outcomes Rubric:

Learning Outcomes and Measures	Level of Attainment		
<u>Learning Outcome 1:</u> <i>Efficiently and thoroughly research a legal topic using both primary and secondary sources.</i>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>
Staff Editor's work product reflects a reasonably comprehensive review and understanding of relevant sources			
Staff Editor's note or comment incorporates and cites to an appropriate variety of sources.			
Staff Editor consistently met deadlines for submission of drafts of Staff Editor's note or comment (efficiency)			
Staff Editor consistently met deadlines for editing and sourcing assignments (efficiency)			
Comments:			
<u>Learning Outcome 2:</u> <i>Effectively use and synthesize authorities to explain applicable legal principles and rules.</i>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>
Staff Editor's work product accurately and concisely describes the relevant legal doctrines and rules			
Staff Editor's work product fairly references the most significant secondary sources on the topic			
Comments:			
<u>Learning Outcome 3:</u> <i>Develop, support, and critique legal arguments using precedent and policy.</i>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>
Staff Editor makes cogent arguments based in law			
Staff Editor supports legal arguments with relevant authority			
Staff Editor effectively employs policy arguments in support of Staff Editor's position			
Staff Editor fairly addresses contrary positions			
Comments:			
<u>Learning Outcome 4:</u> <i>Write about legal issues in a concise, clear, and organized manner</i>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>
Staff Editor's writing is concise and clear			

Staff Editor's writing is well-organized			
Comments:			
<u>Learning Outcome 5: Demonstrate proficiency with Bluebook citation.</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>
ICW Exercises (min. scores)			
Staff Editor accurately uses Bluebook citation in note or comment			
Staff Editor accurately employs Bluebook citation in editing work			
Comments:			
<u>Learning Outcome 6: Technically and substantively edit their own work and the work of others, including evaluating and revising for accuracy, effective organization, clarity, and style.</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>
Staff Editor's editing was thorough and accurate			
Staff Editor provided helpful editing suggestions for organization, clarity, and writing style			
Comments:			
<u>Learning Outcome 7: Demonstrate professionalism by meeting deadlines, incorporating feedback, and communicating promptly and respectfully with peers, faculty, and others.</u>	<u>Exemplary</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Needs Improvement</u>
Staff Editor met deadlines			
Staff Editor incorporated feedback of professor(s) and editor(s)			
Staff Editor communicated promptly			
Staff Editor communicated professionally and courteously			
Comments:			