

Annual Academic Assessment Report
Juris Doctor and Law Certificate Programs
University of Arkansas School of Law
July 2019

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

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

For the first time since 2015, our students participated in the Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE). The LSSSE survey covers the entire student experience in the classroom and beyond, and the findings are designed to inform the law school about the students' impressions of the educational and administrative aspects of their law school experience in comparison to a national group of participating institutions. The administration is still reviewing the results of the 2019 survey, but some changes are already being made in response to student input from the survey. For example, in the summer of 2019, we began a comprehensive review of the curriculum and implemented a new longer-range process for curriculum planning. We also reconfigured a new student services suite to better serve our students as a holistic one-stop shop. The new suite encompasses the registrar's office, academic success team, externships, career services, and admissions offices.

Bar Passage

Relevant to all program goals and learning outcomes, we continue to monitor bar exam performance and report our graduates' 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 2016 graduating class, 94 of the 97 graduates (96.91%) who took a bar exam passed within two years of graduation. Our pass rate for all first-time takers (all jurisdictions) was 68.3% for calendar year 2018 and 84.31% for calendar year 2017.

Employment Outcomes

Relevant to all program goals and learning outcomes, we continue to monitor employment outcomes and report our graduates' outcomes according to the American Bar Association's approach of taking a "snapshot" at ten months after graduation. For the 113 members of the Class of 2018, at ten months out, 105 graduates (92.9%) were employed in Bar Passage Required, J.D. Advantage, Professional positions or Pursuing a Graduate Degree Full Time. Our employment rate for the Class of 2017 was 88.8% and 91.6% for the Class of 2016.

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

Based on a presentation and recommendations from the Director of Academic Excellence and Bar Skills, the law faculty voted to move forward with a freestanding assessment mechanism, likely in the form of a preliminary bar exam. The Academic Excellence team is still reviewing options for implementation, but the preliminary bar exam will likely be administered at some point during the students' first year of legal studies. The preliminary bar exam would provide a wealth of information to the students and faculty about our students' understanding of substantive law, as well as exam-taking strengths and weaknesses. In addition, we continue to expand our tools for intervening with at risk students.

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

The Strategic Planning Committee shifted its focus in 2018-19 from oral and written communications (programmatic learning objective #3) to the fundamental understanding of the basic elements of substantive law, procedure, and legal theory (programmatic learning objective #2). The law faculty decided to explore options for administering a preliminary bar exam to assess student mastery of substantive law.

- **Plans for the 2019-20 Academic Year**

Under the direction of the Associate Dean for Student Success, the law school will develop a plan for administering a preliminary bar exam, and for analyzing the data obtained from that exam. The Associate Dean for Student Success will work with a newly established academic advising committee to revise and improve the academic advising process so that students better understand course offerings, requirements for graduation, and the relationship of coursework to career objectives. A more comprehensive and standardized advising process will also provide opportunities to assess various aspects of the student experience at the law school. In particular, the newly formed student services suite and academic advising committee will allow us to provide better service to our students and better assess learning outcomes.