



COLLEGE OF LAW

# STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

APRIL 2021

[law.unl.edu/strategic-plan](http://law.unl.edu/strategic-plan)

## OUR MISSION



WE DEVELOP  
INCLUSIVE LEADERS  
WHO ADVANCE JUSTICE,  
SOLVE PROBLEMS, AND  
SERVE WITH INTEGRITY.

From December 2018 until May 2019, a group of approximately 50 University of Nebraska College of Law faculty, administrators, staff, students, and alumni met to create a strategic plan for the College of Law. The plan was finalized over the summer of 2019 and includes a new mission statement, an expression of our values, and three primary commitments, as well as specific strategies we would use to fulfill those commitments and key indicators of success. We expected to begin implementation of the plan during the 2019-20 academic year.

This Strategic Plan Progress Report is both backward- and forward-looking. It will provide a clear-eyed assessment of the progress (and lack of progress) on our three commitments to date. It also will consider what can be done to move forward, recognizing that the College is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, it assumes that some relative “normalcy” will return to the College’s operations by September 2021 and it will identify some key steps the College will take during the 2021-22 academic year to live its mission, promote its values, and fulfill its commitments to the College of Law community.

### **FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENTS - HIGHLIGHTS AND PLANS**

The three commitments we identified in 2019 have guided our work and will continue to do so moving forward. In the pages that follow, we present a few highlights for each commitment from the last 18 months. We also identify select goals for the next 18 months. A more comprehensive list of our efforts and plans can be found online at [law.unl.edu/strategic-plan](http://law.unl.edu/strategic-plan).

### **VALUES**

At Nebraska Law, we:

- Think Creatively
- Listen Graciously
- Speak Thoughtfully
- Value Diversity
- Build Community
- Serve Humbly
- Act Courageously
- Work Hard
- Demand Excellence

### **COMMITMENTS**

To achieve our mission, live our values, and build upon our strengths, the Nebraska Law community is focused on three shared commitments:

1. Building an inclusive and connected community;
2. Preparing our students for a lifetime of learning, service, and ethical leadership; and,
3. Solving vital societal problems.

# Commitment One: Building an inclusive and connected community

*What's Happened: September 2019 - March 2021*



## DIVERSITY

Led the creation of the Nebraska Legal Diversity Council, a nonprofit involving stakeholders from law firms, corporations, government offices, nonprofits, law schools and the state bar association, dedicated to recruitment and retention of diverse legal professionals in Nebraska



## INCLUSIVE

Developed a series of presentations to and workshops with faculty regarding inclusive pedagogy in the classroom



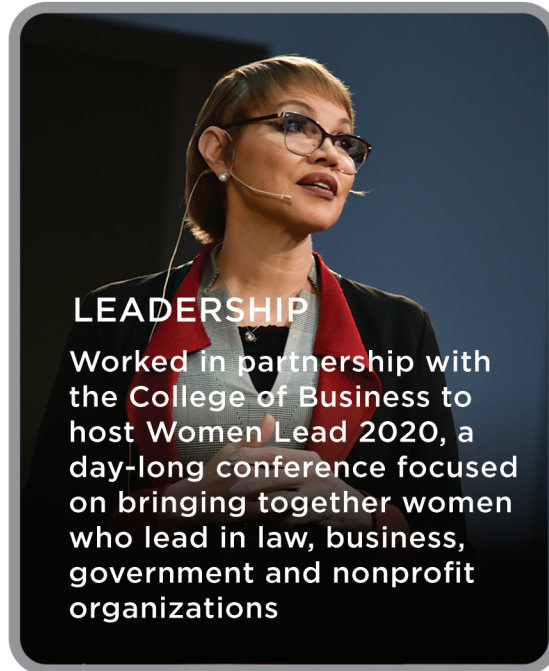
## SPEAK THOUGHTFULLY

Led campus-wide conversations on civil discourse and productive disagreement for Peace + Civility Week and Election Day



## STRENGTHS

Hired an expert consultant to provide manager and team coaching related to Gallup's Clifton Strengths assessment as well as to work throughout the academic year with staff, administrators, and students on understanding and developing their individual strengths



## LEADERSHIP

Worked in partnership with the College of Business to host Women Lead 2020, a day-long conference focused on bringing together women who lead in law, business, government and nonprofit organizations



## LIBRARY

Obtained \$6 million to renovate the Schmid Law Library to build more community spaces and classrooms

*What's Coming: April 2021 - September 2022*



## HIRING

Develop hiring processes and plans to obtain a highly diverse applicant pool for every open position at the College of Law



## PLANNING

Complete and begin executing a strategic diversity and inclusion plan



## PROGRAMMING

Engage in community educational programming aimed at building an inclusive community



## RECRUITMENT

Develop and implement an innovative plan for recruitment of a diverse student body, including the exploration of outside scholarships for diverse students and the creation of an online summer institute for first-generation college students interested in the law



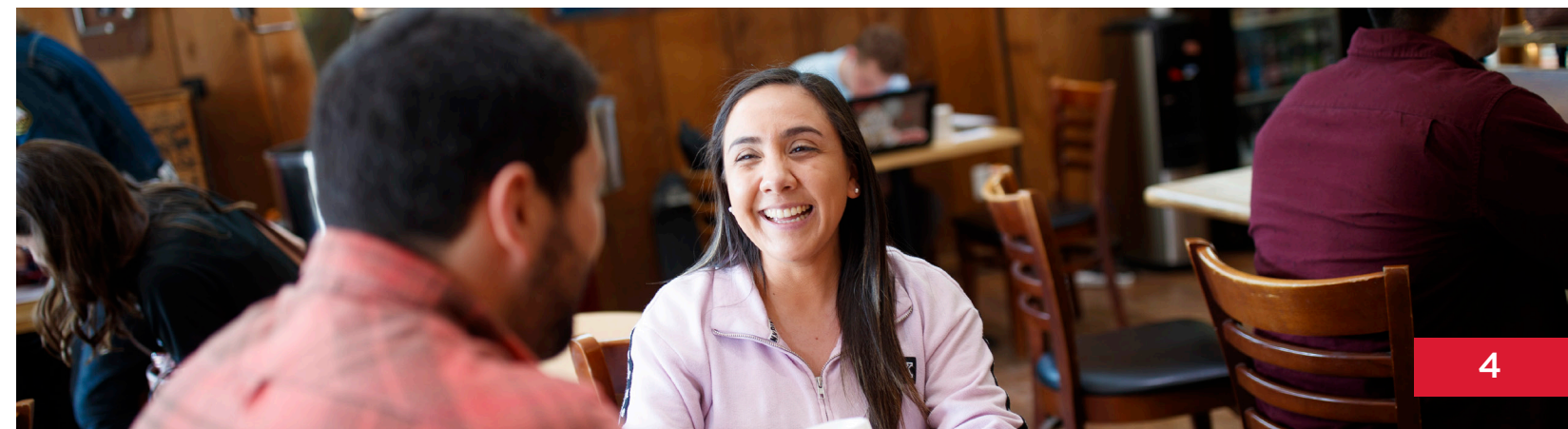
## STRENGTHS

Expand the College's Strengths program to ensure all students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to explore how to succeed by utilizing their strengths




## WELLNESS

Develop a robust wellness program for students to coincide with the opening of the renovated law library



# Commitment Two: Preparing our students of a lifetime of learning, service and ethical leadership


*What's Happened: September 2019 - March 2021*



**LEADERSHIP**  
Launched 2L Inclusive Leadership Pilot Program – a program designed to connect 2L students with curricular and co-curricular opportunities that will help them achieve their professional goals.



**POLICY**  
Joined the ABA Police Practices Consortium in Fall 2020 to provide opportunities to students interested in policy development with law enforcement



**PRO BONO**  
Emphasized involvement in the ABA Free Legal Answers Program, resulting in national recognition by the ABA as a Pro Bono Leader for 2018, 2019, and 2020




**RESEARCH**  
Expanded the Schmid Research Fellows program to provide pro bono legal research for nonprofit organizations




*What's Coming: April 2021 - September 2022*



**CULTURAL COMPETENCY**  
Complete report on how to measure and track College's success in satisfying Learning Outcome #6 related to cultural competency




**CURRICULUM**  
Actively search for professors to teach Race and the Law and to offer courses focusing on systemic racism



**ETHICS**  
Develop ways to infuse ethics and integrity in classes beyond Professional Responsibility




**HONOR CODE**  
Complete report on developing a new Honor Code for the College of Law



**LEADERSHIP**  
Develop and implement a program on Inclusive Leadership that includes 1L opportunities, mandatory curriculum for upper-class students, co-curricular leadership opportunities, and faculty and staff learning opportunities



**LEARNING**  
Complete report on how to measure and track College's success in satisfying Learning Outcome #1 related to our core educational outcomes



**SERVICE**  
Develop a center or program focused on public interest and public service work – become the best place in America for students interested in public interest work and public service

# Commitment Three: Solving vital societal problems

*What's Happened: September 2019 - March 2021*




**BUSINESS**  
 Joined the College of Business in submitting a proposal to Board of Regents to begin a Law and Business major at the College of Business, which will include multiple courses taught to undergraduates by College of Law professors



**RURAL RECONCILIATION**  
 Started the Rural Reconciliation Project, an interdisciplinary exploration of the past and future of rural areas



**TECHNOLOGY**  
 Started the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center to connect research among the Colleges of Law, Business, Engineering, and Journalism, funded by over \$5.5 million in grants, including hiring two new professors and two staff members to build out the Center



**MARKETING**  
 Implemented a multipronged and wide-spread marketing and communication effort highlighting the work of individual professors, through direct mail, revamped website, and social media. Launched the campaign with focus on the work of Professors Blankley, Hurwitz, and Schutz; finalizing the campaigns for Professors Shoemaker, Medill, Berger, and Langvardt for release in Spring 2021

*What's Coming: April 2021 - September 2022*



**CHILDREN**  
 Obtain permanent funding for the Children's Justice Clinic




**GRANT FUNDING**  
 Encourage and assist law faculty who wish to engage in grant-funded research opportunities



**LOCAL ISSUES**  
 Evaluate and propose ways in which faculty and students can interact with Lincoln and Nebraska stakeholders to help solve local and state problems and legal issues



**RESEARCH**  
 Strengthen and expand core programs by developing three-year strategic plans to grow funding and research opportunities for the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center, the Space, Cyber, and Telecommunications Program, Law & Psychology, the Rural Reconciliation Program, and the Law+Business Program



**TRADE**  
 Hire a Yeutter Chair in Law as part of our commitment to the Yeutter Institute of International Trade and Finance



## FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENTS

- Conduct a periodic assessment and prioritization of administrative organization and support systems to promote efficiency and organizational effectiveness;
- Develop a College-wide technology plan, including funding strategies, to ensure the efficacy of our pedagogical and administrative practices; and
- Evaluate on- and off-campus events to ensure alignment of each activity with our mission and the effective use of our resources.

## KEY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Identify and develop key metrics to help us measure our success in recruitment of students, diversity, job placement, research impact, and budgetary efficiency



## CHALLENGES DURING THE LAST 18 MONTHS

It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted our ability to significantly fulfill aspects of Commitment One. Specifically, it was difficult to “create and sustain interactions among College professionals, current students, and alumni that enrich the Nebraska Law experience for all members of our community,” in 2020-21. We struggled to build community and places for interactions among College professionals, students, and alumni in the face of the health and safety restrictions of the pandemic. Programming over Zoom was not well-attended and in-person gatherings were considered too risky during 2020-21. Student recruitment efforts were hampered by the inability to bring prospective students to campus in a group to experience the sense of community that helps distinguish the College.

The diversity goals of Commitment One remain challenging, not because of lack of effort but rather because of our location and Nebraska’s legal restrictions. We have made offers to diverse faculty candidates but not succeeded in recruiting a faculty person of color to move to Lincoln. We have increased our applications from and offers of admission to prospective students of color, but have been unable to increase our percentage of students of color because such students often do not accept our offer of admission. Many faculty have begun to examine aspects of race in a variety of doctrinal courses; however, we have not offered any new courses related to race and the law. Despite these challenges, the College is committed to increasing diversity and becoming more inclusive.

With regard to Commitment Two, areas that did not receive significant attention during the last 18 months include emphasizing collaboration with other professions and professionals. We have made progress on developing numerous opportunities for students interested in public service and public interest work.



However, we have not moved forward significantly on creating a formal center or program that brings these efforts together with curricular offerings and professor scholarship. Finally, although we have run a pilot program on leadership and professional development for a group of twenty 2L students during each of the past two years, we have not developed a plan to require small-group training for all students in professional skills. We are working on scaling up the pilot program but it is a work-in-progress.

With regard to Commitment Three, we did begin a number of significant new research initiatives, including the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center and the Rural Reconciliation Project. However, we have not invested similar time or resources into some of our more established programs. For example, the Law & Psychology Program has not expanded its footprint at the College of Law and perhaps has even shrunk in terms of faculty and student interaction with the Psychology Department. We have not hired a Yeutter Chair to participate in the Yeutter Institute (although Professor Matt Schaefer has been significantly engaged with the Institute in his role as the Veronica A. Haggart & Charles R. Work Professor of International Trade Law). The Space, Cyber, & Telecommunications Program has grown its scholarly profile and reputation, particularly with its participation in the Woomera Manual project. It also attracts JD students who want to study those topics. However, the LL.M. and J.S.D. enrollments remain flat. Finally, we offered a robust schedule of faculty workshops, even throughout the pandemic, but we have not focused on a variety of methodologies nor identified significant grant funding opportunities for faculty.

Another important impact of COVID-19 has been on the ability of the College to engage in some of the administrative self-reflection identified by the Strategic Plan under the “Fulfilling our Commitments” section of the Plan. This work did not happen because our administrative bandwidth was consumed with delivering our normal services in the midst of the global pandemic. Our administrative response to COVID-19 included moving to entirely remote teaching and working for the end of the spring 2020 semester and that summer, reconstituting the structure and technological capabilities of our building and classrooms to be able to offer a learning environment that permitted classes to be offered both in-person and online, creating comprehensive health and safety protocols and procedures for the 2020-21 academic year, and reducing the College’s budget by 9.2% over

