




COLLEGE OF LAW

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

FEBRUARY 2023

law.unl.edu/strategic-plan





The College of Law published a Strategic Plan in September 2019, after ten months of work by over fifty law school stakeholders, including faculty, administrators, staff, students, and alumni. The Plan included a new mission statement, a set of nine core values, and three commitments with identified goals and outcomes. The plan is both authentic (i.e., describing who we really are as a community) and aspirational (i.e., describing who we want to be on our best days).

In April of 2021, we reported our progress, noting several significant achievements helping us live our mission and fulfill our commitments. We also recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic altered our priorities and forced us to adjust some timelines. We identified a next phase of goals and work to be completed in the subsequent 18 months.

Now, in February 2023, we are publishing this Second Progress Report. As noted when we first published our Plan in 2019, the Plan was always meant to be our guiding star, a reminder of our collective best attempt to set goals, metrics, and direction. It was never intended to be a rigid pact resistant to change. Our work has been directionally consistent since 2019, but we have adjusted along the way, whether to manage the uncertainties of a global pandemic or to pursue new opportunities that we had not imagined when this project first began. Measuring our progress has been more difficult than we initially imagined, so we are continuing to evaluate how to best demonstrate our success and identify where we need to improve.

Our dedication to realizing our mission, living our values, and fulfilling our commitments has never been stronger. Although our mission and commitments seem to have gained broad support, we continue to have robust discussions about what it means to “develop inclusive leaders” and how, exactly, we should prepare students for their professional careers. Those debates have in many ways reinforced and strengthened our collective desire to impact the lives of our students and our communities through the work of teaching students, developing professionals, and solving societal problems.

This Second Progress Report will update our community on our accomplishments from the last 18 months, identify areas where our ambitions fell short, and look forward to what we hope to achieve in the next two years.

Commitment One: Building an inclusive and connected community

Over the last 18 months, we have worked to build an inclusive and connected community, providing high quality programming related to inclusive leadership and wellness and enhancing each individual's understanding of their own strengths.

What's Happened: April 2021 - October 2022



HIRING

Developed hiring practices to obtain a diverse applicant pool at Nebraska Law and evaluate candidates based on talents and Nebraska Law's values.



LIBRARY

Opened the renovated Schmid Law Library, a \$6 million project that includes two technology-enabled classrooms and gathering spaces for our community.



RECRUITMENT

Increased efforts in diversity recruitment, resulting in an increase from 8% entering students of color in 2020 to 20% entering students of color in 2022.



WELLNESS

A new wellness council supported programming including yoga, guided meditation, religious observations, and in-person office hours with the Nebraska Lawyers Assistance Program.



MILESTONES

Celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Nebraska Law Review and the 50th anniversary of the Multicultural Legal Society.



COMMUNITY

First-year students had the opportunity to participate in a summer book club with the Dean and had one-on-one meetings with the Assistant Dean for Student Development.



DIVERSITY

The Nebraska Legal Diversity Council hired its first executive director, who is actively engaged with Nebraska Law and our students of color.



CONNECTION

Partnered with the College of Business for the third Women Lead conference with over 300 leaders from across Nebraska.

clusive and connected community

What's Coming: November 2022 - November 2024



DISCOURSE

Emphasize the important role of lawyers in maintaining our democracy through the engaged, gracious, and thoughtful exchange of ideas by creating a two-year Law and Democracy speaker series that will run from September 2022 through May 2024.



PUBLIC INTEREST

Develop a Public Interest Scholarship Program to identify high-quality prospective students interested in public interest careers and give them financial and other incentives to attend Nebraska Law.



HIRING

Hire an Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion who will lead the development of an explicit DE&I strategic plan.



PIPELINE

Develop summer programming aimed at building a pipeline for students of color to law school.



RECRUITMENT

Continue to emphasize recruitment of diverse and talented faculty, staff, and students through expanded and individualized outreach to candidates for open positions and to qualified prospective students of color.

Commitment Two: Preparing our students of a life

Since April 2021, we have continued to examine our program to ensure that we deliver a comprehensive legal education that provides a strong foundation in critical thinking and legal analysis, as well as a skills-based focus on practice-orientated learning through clinics, externships, and other experiential learning opportunities.

What's Happened: April 2021 - October 2022



CURRICULUM

Reduced the number of first-year credit hours from 33 to 30 to allow for deep thinking and focused study.



ADVANCING JUSTICE

Approved courses in Race and the Law; the Role of the State Attorney General; Agriculture, Race and Connections to Place; and Prisoner's Rights.



FOUNDATIONAL COURSES

Added two course requirements: a first-year Gender, Race, Class and the Law course, and a second-year Administrative Law course.



SERVICE

Began a Board Service Leadership Externship Program in which students serve on local non-profit boards as ex officio members.



HIRING

Hired four full-time professors, three visiting professors and two fellows to teach core, fundamental courses.



LEADERSHIP

Created the Duane W. Acklie Honor Scholarship program to recruit ten students who have demonstrated leadership potential.



PRACTICAL SKILLS

Added a sixth legal clinic - the Housing Justice Clinic, an expansion of the Tenant Assistance Project.



EXPERIENCE

Created opportunities for hands-on learning through community clinics and the Debtors' Defense Project.



EXTERNSHIPS

Hired a Director of Externships to coordinate and supervise all student externships, to teach a seminar that coincides with every externship, and to manage a new, semester-long joint program in Washington, D.C. with the University of Iowa College of Law.

Timeline of learning, service, and ethical leadership

What's Coming: November 2022 - November 2024



FACULTY

Hire new faculty to teach core courses: Civil Procedure, Torts, Contracts, Criminal Law, Gender, Race, Class and the Law (new required course), and Administrative Law (new required course).



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Begin operating a First Amendment Clinic; funded through a grant from the Stanton Foundation.



HONOR CODE

Complete our two-year study of the Honor Code and determine necessary revisions.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

Review our Learning Outcomes and develop specific measures that can be tracked to ensure students are satisfying outcomes prior to graduation.



PROGRAMS

Establish initiatives related to (1) Advancing Justice and (2) Developing Inclusive Leaders that include curricular offerings, extracurricular opportunities, externships, and scholarly inquiries.



ETHICS

Expand the ways in which ethics and integrity are infused into courses beyond professional responsibility.



LEADERSHIP

Begin offering a course on Law and Leadership, a program of concentrated study in leadership, and partner with the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication to provide a certificate in leadership.

Commitment Three: Solvin

The College has made great strides in its fulfillment of Commitment Three goals. Our collaboration with the College of Business has grown as we partnered on an undergraduate Business and Law Major, in addition to the existing minor. Two faculty-led initiatives – the Rural Reconciliation Project and the Nebraska Governance and Technology Center continue to thrive and grow.

What's Happened: April 2021 - October 2022



TRADE

Hired Professor Matt Schaefer as the Yeutter Chair in Law. He will be an integral part of the Clayton Yeutter Institute of International Trade.



SPACE

Professor Beard and the editorial board presented the Woomera Manual on the International Law of Military Space Activities and Operations to 24 countries.



CHILDREN

Began the Children's Justice Attorney Education Program to train rural attorneys on best practices as guardians ad litem.



PROFESSORSHIPS

Professors Blankley, Shoemaker, and Thimmesch earned professorships in recognition of their accomplishments.



HOUSING

Received grant funding to begin a Housing Justice Clinic, including two fellows and a resource coordinator.



WORKSHOPS

Held regular faculty workshops on a variety of scholarly topics presented by Nebraska Law and visiting professors.



REGULATION

The Nebraska Governance and Technology Center continued its robust programming and work in Nebraska and across the U.S.



MARKETING

Continued to release marketing campaigns that highlight the research and scholarship of our faculty. Videos available at: law.unl.edu/researchimpact.



BUSINESS

Added a Sponsoring Partner (Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska) to the Law+Business program.



AWARDS

Faculty and students have received numerous recognitions and awards for their work in the community.

ng vital societal problems

What's Coming: November 2022 - November 2024



NATIONAL SECURITY

Change the name and emphasis of our Space, Cyber, and Telecommunications Law Program to Space, Cyber, and National Security Law Program to capitalize on our growing expertise in national security and increasing interest in the program from the U.S. military.



CHILDREN'S JUSTICE

Make the Children's Justice Clinic a permanent offering at the College of Law, including obtaining permanent funding for the Clinic.



PSYCHOLOGY

Hire new faculty to continue the College of Law's long-standing collaboration with the UNL Department of Psychology in the nationally recognized Law and Psychology Program.

- The Civil Clinic received Nebraska Appleseed's Seeds of Justice Award.
- Professor Ryan Sullivan received the Access to Justice Award from the Association of American Law Schools.
- Alan Dugger and Rachel Tomlinson Dick were recognized with the Nebraska State Bar Association's Rise Award.
- Professor Anna Shavers posthumously received the Nebraska State Bar Association Women and the Law Section's Outstanding Contributor to Women in the Law Award.
- Professor Brett Stohs and the Weibling Entrepreneurship Clinic were recognized with the Distinguished Hall of Fame Award by the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Best Practices Summit.
- For the fourth consecutive year, the College of Law was recognized as a Pro Bono Leader by the American Bar Association for providing extraordinary services through the ABA Free Legal Answers program.
- Nebraska Law's Manoah B. Reese Chapter of Phi Alpha Delta was honored with the Outstanding Community Service Program Award.

FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENTS

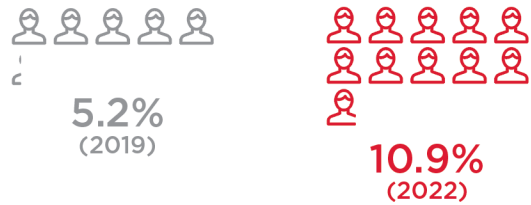
We have made great strides in the last 18 months, making the College of Law operate more efficiently and effectively. We have:

- Invested \$500,000 in upgrades to our classroom technology, most of which had not been updated in over 15 years.
- Planned the purchase and implementation of a client management system for our clinics, so that all in-house clinics will operate with the same technology. This will create significant efficiencies in clinic operations and will introduce students to how such systems impact the practice of law.
- Created a College-wide communication and calendaring system through Microsoft SharePoint, which provides cloud-based document storage for administrative offices and student organizations, as well as individually-tailored communications so that each student, faculty, and staff member receive information specifically targeting their interests and needs.
- Created administrative efficiencies within the College and through work with University partners, including streamlining our interactions with the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships by having law students work with a financial aid specialist housed at the law school, and fully utilizing the University's IT and Registration infrastructure to relieve burdensome procedures at the College level.
- Hired administrative professionals to assist faculty so that they can focus on teaching and scholarship, including two legal assistants, a student advisor, a communications coordinator, and a director of externships.
- Convened a Communications Council of representatives from all departments to coordinate and disseminate information about events and College activities.
- Implemented a shared communication tool among all student advisors to centralize recordkeeping and notes on student counseling.
- Coordinated efforts among Student Development, the Associate Dean for Faculty, and 1L professors to revamp our academic success program and academic support efforts.

REPORTING ON KEY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

DIVERSITY

Diversity of College of Law employees:
resident and adjunct faculty and staff



Diversity of entering class of 1Ls



ENTERING CREDENTIALS

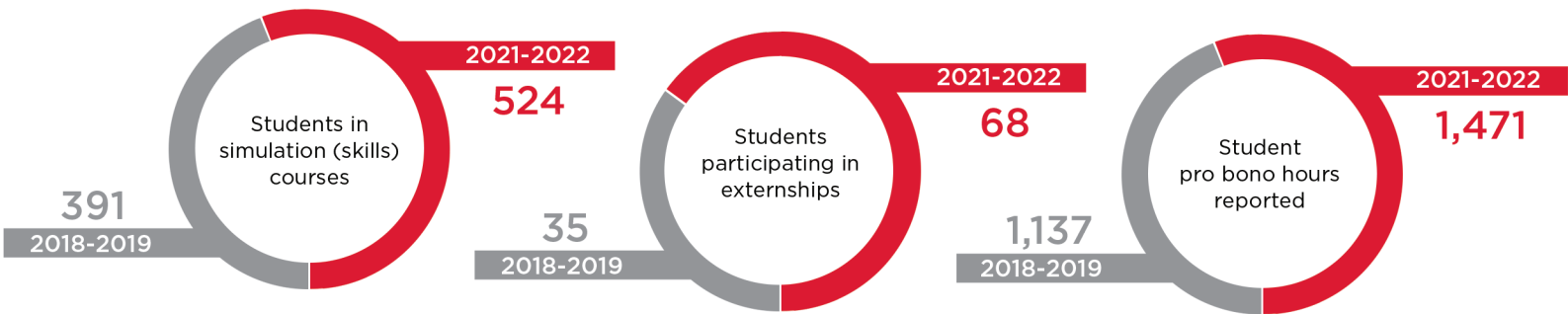
Qualifications of entering class of 1Ls:
median LSAT



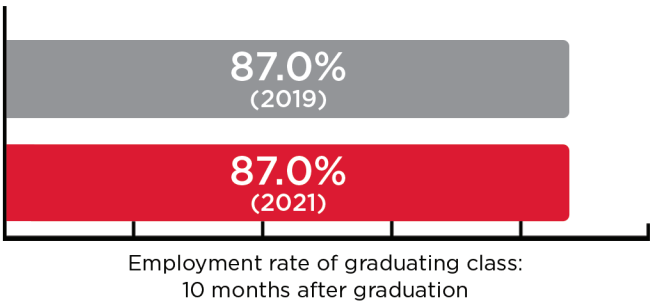
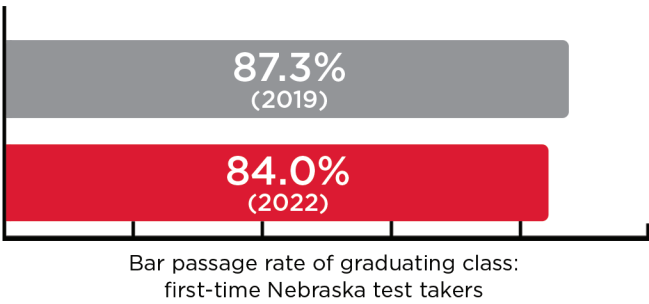
Qualifications of entering class of 1Ls:
median GPA



CURRICULUM



OUTCOMES



DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS, WE WILL:

- Develop climate surveys at the College of Law related to bias, inclusion, and cross-cultural competency.
- Measure faculty and student engagement with other NU colleges, departments, and programs.
- Collect statistics related to professional development programs at the College.
- Conduct alumni surveys related to professional skills, public interest, pro bono, feelings of professional success, and preparation for their career.
- Measure demand for Nebraska faculty expertise.
- Track successful grant applications involving Nebraska Law professors.
- Measure the positive impact of faculty scholarship.

